

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Board of Directors (“the Board”) of the Enoch Pratt Free Library (“the Pratt”) is submitting this request for proposal (“RFP”) for consulting services associated with an important Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (“DEI”) initiative of the Board.

1. About the Board and the Pratt

On January 21, 1882, Baltimore businessman [Enoch Pratt](#) offered a gift to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore of a Central library, four branch libraries, and an endowment of \$1,058,333. Mr. Pratt stated, “My library shall be for all, rich and poor without distinction of race or color, who, when properly accredited, can take out the books if they will handle them carefully and return them.”

Today, the Pratt is composed of 21 neighborhood branches, a mobile services unit, and Central Library that serves as the State Library Resource Center. FY20 total operations amounted to \$45M, which was supported 38% by Baltimore City’s General Fund, 48% by the State of Maryland, and 16% by private funding.

The Board appoints the Chief Executive Officer of the Pratt, who is responsible for the administration of the Pratt. The Board consists of approximately 35 members, and the DEI Committee contains approximately 7 members.

Since Mr. Pratt’s gift, the Pratt’s mission remains to provide equal access to information, services, and opportunities that empower, enrich, and enhance the quality of life for all. In implementing this mission, the Pratt has become a leader in library services—for our nation, for the citizens of Maryland, and for the residents of Baltimore City.

- For the nation, the Pratt is often at the forefront of library innovative policy initiatives and our last CEO, Carla Hayden, is now serving as the 14th Librarian of Congress (and is the first woman and first African American to hold the post).
- For Maryland, the Pratt serves, among other things, as the State Library Resource Center and manages the day-to-day operations of Sailor, a project of Maryland’s public libraries that provide broadband internet access for public libraries, schools and local governments in Maryland, and an extensive collection of research databases for use of Maryland public library customers.

- For Baltimore City, the Pratt is a safe place that offers opportunities and services not found or available elsewhere. Importantly, the Pratt served as a beacon of stability and calm for city residents to the unrest during and following Freddie Gray's death and as a resource in bridging the digital divide in Baltimore highlighted by the COVID-19 environment. The continued trust of and service to city resident is of critical concern.

2. Board DEI Vision Statement

To embrace and promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) as core values of the operations of the Enoch Pratt Free Library Boards of Directors and Trustees.

3. Board DEI Mission Statement

We are committed to identifying and communicating opportunities to increase the sensitivity of DEI among current Directors and Trustees in order to better represent and support the Enoch Pratt Free Library and its strategic priorities. To that end, we will employ DEI principles in the engagement of Directors and Trustees, including recruitment and retention, in executing our responsibilities.

4. Pratt 2020-2024 Strategic Plan (attached in Appendix to this RFP)

The Pratt is committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion. Transformation must occur on the individual, collective, and institutional levels, and the Pratt recognizes that it can help achieve true and sustained equity through intentional and systemic library-community partnerships. The Pratt is working to achieve equity in the communities it serves by:

- Eliminating racial and social equity barriers in library programs, services, policies and practices, staffing, salaries, and leadership structures.
- Creating and maintaining an environment of diversity, inclusion, and respect, both in the Library system and in the Library's community role.
- Serving as a convener and facilitating conversations and partnerships to address community challenges, and being forthright on tough issues that are important to communities the Library services

5. Request for Proposal

To assist the Board in implementing (a) its vision and mission statements and (b) its responsibility to oversee the Pratt's implementation of its strategic plan, the Board is issuing this RFP. The Board seeks a two-phased proposal.

- Phase One. The Board has created a stand-alone committee of the Board dedicated to examining DEI issues ("DEI Committee"). Phase One will be to lead discussions with the DEI Committee addressing what DEI means, whether the Board is ready for DEI discussions, what the Board is trying to achieve with respect to DEI issues, including within the Strategic Plan, how it may achieve such results, and how it may measure success regarding its goals. Specific issues may include how to enhance the diversity of the board when considering future candidates, assess the sensitivity of Board members to DEI issues, foster inclusiveness among Board members, and effect community outreach on DEI issues.
- Phase Two. Phase Two will be to roll out the efforts undertaken with the DEI Committee to the entire Board.

In addition to outlining your proposed approach, responses should include (a) a pricing proposal (and any assumptions on which such proposal is based, if necessary), (b) an identification of proposed team members for Phase One and Two, including biographies, (c) a description of past experience with DEI, if not reflected in the biographies, and (d) any other information you deem relevant.

6. Time Frame

The Board plans to select a proposal based on the following timeframe:

- Issuance of the RFP.
- June 16, 2021. All interested parties should communicate their plans to submit an RFP, in writing, to procurement@prattlibrary.org. Should you have any requests for clarification regarding this RFP, please submit them in writing no later than June 23, 2021.
- July 1, 2021. The DEI Committee will provide a response via email to any timely requests for clarification to all those who expressed interest to participate in writing no later than this date.
- July 12, 2021. Submission of Responses by Interested Parties. Please submit your response via electronic mail to procurement@prattlibrary.org.

- July 23, 2021. The DEI Committee will begin scheduling a select number of interviews. Depending on existing COVID-19 protocols, likely such interviews will be via videoconference, *e.g.*, Zoom. In anticipation of these interviews, we ask that you maintain flexibility in your schedule for an hour interview during July 28 - August 2, 2021.
- No later than August 30, 2021. The DEI Committee anticipates making its selection with notification of award.
- After September 7 through December 2021. Initiation of implementation of Phase One.
- 2022. Potential implementation of Phase Two.

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