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## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FUNDRAISING GALA EVENT PLANNER

### Massachusetts Women's History Center

#### I. OVERVIEW

The Massachusetts Women's History Center (**"MWHC"**) is seeking a qualified and experienced fundraising event planner (**"Event Planner"**) to help plan and manage MWHC's Gala (**"Gala"**), to be held in Boston in 2026, prior to June 30 if at all possible. The Event Planner's services are to provide overall event management, including but not limited to assisting with: concept development; location identification; planning; sponsorship; budget management, program development, event production; scheduling; and day-of-event coordination. For more detailed information, see **SECTION IV. SCOPE OF WORK** below.

#### II. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

The Massachusetts Women's History Center (MWHC) is a virtual nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization amplifying the history of Massachusetts women of all backgrounds from throughout the Commonwealth. The MWHC, with its flagship program the Massachusetts Women's Hall of Fame (MWHO), is the successor organization to Suffrage100MA. The MWHC hopes to have a physical space in the future.

The MWHC expands upon Suffrage100MA, to amplify *all* of Massachusetts women's history, sharing inspiring history about Massachusetts women of all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender identities from throughout the Commonwealth. The virtual MWHC provides this information with engaging exhibits, articles, biographies on its website and through presentations and events. The MWHO will honor historic and contemporary Massachusetts women and organizations which have made a profound impact.

#### III. EVENT DESCRIPTION

The Gala is MWHC and MWHO's first large fundraising event/gala, with a goal of 200+ attendees.

We held a Gala June 2023 when we were still Suffrage100MA to celebrate our becoming the MWHC. The funds raised from our 2026 Gala will support MWHC and MWHO website development, exhibit creation, events, and programming. During the event, there will be a live call for donations.

The Gala is anticipated to feature a reception, a dinner and a speaking program honoring individuals and organizations inducted AT THE EVENT into the first MWHO!

#### IV. SCOPE OF WORK

The Event Planner will be expected to provide all services necessary and appropriate to plan and manage the MWHC Gala, including but not limited to the services detailed herein.

##### A. EVENT PLANNING and MANAGEMENT

###### a. Pre-event:

- i. Meetings (please propose # of meetings needed) with MWHC staff to:

1. Discuss & define objectives of the event.
2. Explore possible venues and select a venue.
3. Create a plan (with timeline) for fundraising, sponsorships, timeline for the entire event, speaking program including brainstorming speakers and run of show for the program, live donation call, invitations to speakers and social media, photography and event recording.
4. Discuss ideas/details/vendor list and recommendations.
5. Create a planning timeline for all of the above, up to and including the day of the event.

- ii. Serve as a contact for vendors as identified in the weeks leading up to the event as well as the day of the event. Vendors may include venue, flowers/centerpieces, audio-visual technician(s), photographer, entertainment, etc. Comprehensive list of vendors for the event to be created through the planning process.
- iii. Event Design, such as:
  1. Lighting, décor, rentals, linens, furniture, special entertainment, favors/swag, gifts for honorees.
- iv. Scheduling duties include booking vendors, making arrangements and managing meetings with vendors and MWHC.
- v. Manage any emergencies and/or last-minute issues with the vendors/venue in the final (one-two) weeks leading up to the event as well as the day of the event
- vi. Confirm finalized timing and logistics with any vendors (including any entertainment).
- vii. Establish live donation call strategy, including any software to capture digital fundraising “thermometer” at event, etc.
- viii. Manage printed collateral ie: nametags, posters, table-toppers.
- ix. Review all details/logistics planned for day with the Founder & President.

**b. Day of Event**

- i. Final review of minute-to-minute program to ensure smooth flow of evening.
- ii. Direct the Event, including identify duties and assign to staff & volunteers.
- iii. Event tracking: Timelines & Outlines, Floorplan, Seating Plans.
- iv. Facilitate arrival of vendors and instruct them where to set up (Floral/decor, etc.).
- v. Help transport any necessary décor/materials to venue
- vi. Communicate any last-minute details to MWHC.
- vii. Scheduling: Manage schedules to ensure all necessary parties arrive at the event on time.
- viii. Be the point person with all vendors, rentals, music, entertainment.
- ix. Assist in setting up the room: place cards, table numbers, MWHC banners etc.
- x. Oversee registration table set up as appropriate (place cards, table numbers).
- xi. Review final room set-up on site with MWHC staff & volunteers

before doors open.

- xii. Final review of minute-to-minute program to ensure smooth flow of evening.
- xiii. Stage Manage program and work with MWHC to ensure speakers are where they need to be.
- xiv. Manage live donation call, including speaker, instructions for guests to donate, and overseeing software and digital fundraising thermometer.
- xv. Ensure proper cleanup and that all rented items are returned where they need to be.

## **V. QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS NEEDED**

- A. Proven record of successful event planning, budgeting and fundraising.
- B. Strong communication skills.
- C. Ability to find solutions with limited resources.
- D. Knowledge of the nonprofit sector is a plus.
- E. Able to provide a list of references upon request.
- F. Registered and insured to do business in Massachusetts.

The services outlined herein are not intended to be exhaustive. The selected Event Planner will be expected to be, among other needed skills: organized; detailed oriented; flexible; an effective verbal and written communicator; calm under pressure; and a negotiator in the best interest of the Gala and MWHC.

## **VI. TO APPLY - RFP FORMAT & GUIDELINES**

### **RFP FORMAT & GUIDELINES**

- A. **Timing & FORMAT.** Proposals must be received by 11:59 pm Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026 via email to [info@mawomenshistory.org](mailto:info@mawomenshistory.org) in a single electronic PDF attachment. Proposals will be reviewed as received.
- B. **GUIDELINES.** The proposal shall include the following sections:
  1. Executive Summary. One-page summary of the Event Planner's background, past experiences similar to the Services expected for Gala, and basic understanding of the Services required, and reasons why the Event Planner should be selected.
  2. Company Overview. Overview of the Event Planner's business organization structure, including experience with substantially similar events to the services requested during the past three years.
  3. Event Planner Bio: Short biography of each individual who will be involved with Gala and their role before, during and after Gala.
  4. Fees. Provide (1) proposed project based fixed fee, including description of all costs and fees the Event Planner proposes to charge MWHC, and (2) hourly rates of the event member planning team.
  5. References. List of at least three (3) events substantially similar to the Gala, including a description of the event (including size of the event, format of the event, type of guests hosted, stage settings built, etc.), and references for each whom the Event Planner has performed similar event planning services (Names, Address, Email, and Contact Number).
  6. Samples. Sample of previous work related to the Services (e.g. conference final report, event production timeline with pre/during/post deliverables, promotional material, event budgets which includes all

anticipated costs and fees, project plans, photos, etc.).

7. Other Information. Any additional information that Event Planner believes will be relevant to the RFP and the Event Planner's capability to provide the Services.

## **VII. CONTRACT**

This RFP does not constitute a contract. MWHC will negotiate a contract with the selected Event Planner.

The Contract will include customary representations and warranties and confidentiality provisions, including a requirement that the Event Planner will ensure that each of its staff, agents, vendors, and other subcontracted third parties sign confidentiality agreements that are at least as protective of MWHC's confidential and proprietary information as those contained in the Contract. In addition, the selected Event Planner will perform the duties requested as an independent contractor and not as an employee of MWHC.

Once the Contract is fully executed, the Event Planner agrees that all planned expenses will remain within budget and it will not accrue additional expenses. The selected Event Planner does not have the authority to incur expenses on MWHC's behalf without MWHC's prior written approval.

## **VIII. PROPOSAL EVALUATION**

MWHC reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, without prior discussions, and grant final acceptance to the proposal that best meets the needs and interests of MWHC, in its sole discretion. MWHC will be the sole judge of whether a proposal meets the required RFP criteria.

## **IX. CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSE**

Any information disclosed by MWHC herein (and any related correspondence and/or attachments) is considered confidential and constitutes the proprietary information of MWHC. All submissions will become the property of MWHC and will be treated as confidential between MWHC and the Event Planner. MWHC will use its commercially reasonable efforts not to disclose the contents of the Event Planner's proposal to other participants or the public. MWHC reserves the rights to discuss the submissions with its consultants, references provided by the Event Planner, and other related parties during the evaluations process

## **X. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

By submitting a proposal, the Event Planner acknowledges that it has read this RFP, understands it, and agrees to be bound by its requirements.

Event Planner understands and agrees that they are solely responsible for its own business expenses, except for pre-approved, reasonable business expenses related to the Gala, such as travel accommodations. Event Planner agrees to keep their fixed fee and other terms of their engagement open for at least sixty (60) days past the submission deadline.

Once the Event Planner is selected, MWHC and the selected Event Planner must execute a Contract prior to the selected Event Planner commencing services. The Event Planner agrees that the Contract will be a complete and exclusive agreement and will supersede all prior communications between the parties.

Should MWHC and the selected Event Planner be unable to agree on the terms of an Contract within a reasonable time (at MWHC's sole discretion), MWHC reserves the right to suspend or terminate negotiations without notice, and to pursue negotiations with another Event Planner. Any suspension or termination of negotiations shall be without liability to MWHC or the selected Event Planner(s).

MWHC may terminate this process (in its sole discretion) and issue a new RFP for the requested services.

Each Event Planner shall assume all fees and costs (including but not limited to legal fees) incurred in responding to this RFP and negotiating with MWHC. MWHC shall bear no liability for any costs, fees, or liability incurred in connection with this RFP or any responses thereto.

Event Planner agrees that it shall not directly contact any MWHC Board Members or those who may otherwise have an affiliation with MWHC, in connection with responding to this RFP. Event Planners who do not abide by this requirement may be disqualified from the RFP process.

**MWHC Commitment to Diversity** - MWHC is committed to the diversity of its leadership, staff, and partners. A core value of MWHC is diversity of thought, experience, race, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, age, religion, and national origin.

Questions about this RFP should be directed to the Massachusetts Women's History Center, by email: [info@mawomenshistory.org](mailto:info@mawomenshistory.org).