



# Request for Proposals

## Strategic Planning Facilitator/Consultant

### **Purpose**

SWAN Library Services (SWAN) seeks a consultant who will assist our organization in creating a strategic framework for the future. We are committed to undertaking a strategic process that will actively engage our organization in thinking about the future and planning for the sustainable delivery of the programs and services our membership expects.

Therefore, the purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from consultants experienced in strategic thinking and planning. SWAN seeks a consultant to provide the following services:

1. Provide leadership, direction and expert consultation and advice related to the development of an effective strategic plan.
2. Provide a clear, easily-operationalized, strategic planning process.
3. Assist in evaluating SWAN's mission, vision, and value statements.
4. Facilitate strategic planning meetings.
5. Provide deliverables that support and document the work performed throughout the process.

The desired result is a strategic plan that articulates a vision, mission, values, and strategies that will guide SWAN through 2019 – 2023 with an action for 2019 and 2020.

### **Background**

SWAN provides an optimum tool for sharing resources among 97-member libraries in parts of Cook, DuPage, Kane, and Will counties. Libraries share their resources to meet the needs of their residents for materials in high demand as well as items that are difficult to obtain. Sharing resources allows a patron at their home library to retrieve and check out materials that are not currently available or are not in the collection at their home library. Patrons served by SWAN can also go to any member library and check out materials in person. Patrons from libraries that are independent of the SWAN consortium must utilize a much more elaborate process for requesting material from other libraries.

SWAN as an organization was formed as an Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality (Act 5 ILCS 220/1, entitled the "Intergovernmental Cooperation Act"). Becoming a member of SWAN requires each library



to approve the intergovernmental agreement that in effect jointly creates SWAN. SWAN is generally referred to as a library consortium. The structure and purpose of library consortia varies by US state, or by country.

Libraries in SWAN are either academic, school, special, or public libraries. Of the 97 libraries currently in SWAN, 91 of those libraries are public libraries. SWAN libraries remain autonomous and retain their own organization structure and governance. SWAN is governed through a 7-member board of library directors and administrators who are elected at-large directly by the 97-member library directors. We note this structure of the SWAN entity and the autonomous aspect of the libraries to provide clarity to those unfamiliar with these types of arrangements. SWAN is not hierarchical in the sense that it has no regional authority over participating local libraries, but rather these libraries jointly agree to the purpose of SWAN and agree to policies created through SWAN.

The business of SWAN is to provide continued service and support for sharing resources among member libraries utilizing member fees as its primary revenue stream. SWAN receives additional funding through an affiliation with its regional library system, Reaching Across Illinois Libraries (RAILS), which derives its funding through the Secretary of State Office, which supports 20% of SWAN operations. RAILS also provides financial services and a small level of technical support to SWAN.

SWAN employs 22 staff and leases a business office in Westmont, Illinois. SWAN as an entity was created in 1974 and was essentially a department of the regional library system (formerly called Suburban Library System, and the Metropolitan Library System.) In 2010 SWAN established itself as an independent entity and since that time has taken incremental steps to fully function independently. The most recent step taken was to move SWAN to its own facility.

Our last planning process occurred in 2012 with a strategic plan covering 2013 – 2015. More recently, a joint retreat between SWAN Board and SWAN employees was held in June 2016 that resulted in three strategic initiatives, and a revision of SWAN's mission and vision statements.

SWAN expanded its membership to 19 neighboring libraries through a member library vote in January 2017. The 19 libraries will become full participating member libraries on May 1, 2018 which brings SWAN membership to its total of 97 libraries. The 19 libraries were active, participating members in two neighboring consortia, Library Integrated Network Consortium (LINC), and Multitype Automation Group In Cooperation (MAGIC). The LINC and MAGIC organizations are in the process of dissolving as organizations and will cease to exist as of June 30, 2018.

## **Scope of Project**

The consultant will:



- Lead the creation of a strategic plan that will guide SWAN's focus and work during years 2019 - 2023;
- Monitor and report the progress relative to the development of this plan;
- Fully integrate SWAN staff, board, and member libraries into a culture of collaboration, focused on a shared vision through the strategic planning process;
- Develop and conduct focus groups that target library directors, library staff, and SWAN staff; ideally three focus groups for directors, three focus groups for library staff, and one focus group for SWAN staff;
- Facilitate SWAN Board and SWAN staff discussion relative to development of a two-year action plan; and
- Deliver a clear, accessible strategic plan that includes an action plan for 2019 and 2020.

## **Required Qualifications**

Demonstrated experience with facilitating a consensus-based strategic plans.

Prior experience developing strategic plans for public libraries and/or non-profit membership organizations.

Strong facilitation skills.

Experience at creating a neutral environment for, and soliciting input from, individuals from various sectors.

Experience at gathering and utilizing data to inform the strategic planning process.

Experience in inspiring others to think creatively and innovatively.

Ability to constructively challenge participants.

The flexibility to develop appropriate dates for focus groups as described above that will suit the needs of the library directors, library staff, and the SWAN staff.

The flexibility to attend SWAN Board meetings as needed to move the process along. SWAN Board meetings are normally held the third Friday morning of each month.

Ability to travel to western and southwestern suburbs of Chicago to attend and facilitate meetings.

## **Instructions to Applicants**



All proposals must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 9, 2018 by mail or email to:

Aaron Skog  
Executive Director  
SWAN Library Services  
800 Quail Ridge Drive  
Westmont, IL 60559

[aaron@swanlibraries.net](mailto:aaron@swanlibraries.net) with the subject heading "Proposal for Strategic Planning"

Proposals must include:

- The official name, address, phone number and email address of the applicant (organization or individual) as well as the name of the principal contact person and the name and title of the person authorized to execute the contract.
- Bios/resumes of key personnel fulfilling the contract, if awarded, including key qualifications and previous similar work experience.
- Three references who can speak to their experience with the consultant in similar projects.
- A description of the applicant's approach to strategic planning consultation, including methodology, perspective or philosophy that guides your work.
- A comprehensive work plan that includes:
  - A clear description of the applicant's plan to complete all project components,
  - Identifying, within the process, when participation by the SWAN Board, staff, and library membership is required,
  - a timeline that also indicates "check-in" points for project status updates,
  - the type of deliverables that will be provided throughout the project and when they'll be provided.
  - A detailed budget that breaks out expenses including the consultant's time, materials and supplies, and any other expected expenses.
- Examples of similar projects.
- Example(s) of a finished strategic plan developed by the individual assigned to this project.
- Proposals must be signed by an authorized individual(s) of the applicant organization and include the name, title, address, telephone number and email address of the individual(s) with authority to negotiate and contractually bind the individual/organization.
- All proposals received will be considered in final format.

## Confidentiality



If the applicant deems any material submitted to be proprietary or confidential, that must be indicated in the relevant sections of the response.

## **Inquiries**

The RFP is posted on the SWAN website at <https://www.swanlibraries.net/request-for-proposals/>

Inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to Aaron Skog at [aaron@swanlibraries.net](mailto:aaron@swanlibraries.net). Please put the words "Strategic Planning RFP Inquiry" in the subject line. All inquiries must be made by Tuesday, March 27, 2018. Information provided in response to inquiries will be made available on the SWAN website.

## **Timeframe**

Responses to this proposal are due 5:00 p.m., Monday, April 9, 2018. The SWAN Board will make a decision by Friday, May 18, 2018. Notification to applicants will occur soon after.

Ideally focus group meetings will be held starting the end of July 2018 and into August 2018. Work on the action plan would occur September – early October 2018. The final plan presented for review by the SWAN Board October 19, 2018 and to the SWAN Membership December 6, 2018.

## **Review of Proposals**

Proposals will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- The proposed approach to the scope of work.
- The proposal adequately details project activities, milestones and deliverables associated with each stage of the scope of work.
- The qualifications and experience of the individual(s) identified to fulfill the project.
- The individual's/organization's experience with similar projects.
- References.
- Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and operate within budget.
- Availability for the work to be conducted between July and October 2018.
- The proposal includes detailed costs and the proposed costs are reasonable.



## **Contractual Agreement**

SWAN will issue a contract/letter of agreement with the selected applicant, in which the manner and time of payment will be addressed.

## **Statement of Intent**

SWAN reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any and all responses received in response to this RFP. SWAN will not reimburse costs of preparing the consultant proposals. SWAN reserves the right to cancel the award of contract any time before the execution of the contract by both parties. Responding consultants bear sole risk and responsibility for costs incurred in the preparation and delivery of the proposal. SWAN reserve the right to ask for clarification in the proposal if the need arises.

## **Compliance**

SWAN complies with the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120) and the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140). Proposals received and proposers are subject to SWAN's compliance with these Acts.