Summary
The Dakota County History Organizations (DCHO) seeks a qualified consultant / consulting firm to engage in a Semiquincentennial Concept Plan for America’s 250th that will take place on July 4, 2026. The DCHO consists of the following organizations, all of which are located in Dakota County, Minn.: Dakota County Historical Society (Project Lead), Dakota City Heritage Village, Eagan Historical Society, Randolph Area Historical Society, and Rosemount Area Historical Society. The consultant will be expected to complete the required work from June 1, 2024 to approximately May 1, 2024. The project may be completed earlier, with approved work schedule. This document will specify the project is with DCHS, as the lead on the project, with input from DCHO partners. Other potential partners may be added to the project before it begins in June 2024, pending successful grant award.

Submitting a proposal does not commit DCHS to pay for the costs incurred to prepare the proposal. DCHS reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal received and to extend the deadline, if needed. The request for proposal does not commit DCHS to award a contract.

The project is dependent upon grant funding provided by the Minnesota Historical Society’s Heritage Partnership Grants program.

Organizational Backgrounds
The Dakota County Historical Organizations (DCHO) began meeting bi-monthly in 2021 to share what was going on in the history field throughout the county. The meetings are led by the Dakota County Historical Society, founded in 1939. DCHS utilizes a professional staff to operate three historic sites throughout Dakota County: the Lawshe Memorial Museum in South St. Paul, the LeDuc Historic Estate in Hastings, and the Sibley Historic Site in Mendota. The Dakota City Heritage Village is a largely volunteer-run organization that operates an historic village on the Dakota County Fairgrounds. The Eagan Area Historical Society is a volunteer-run organization that operates the Historic Town Hall building in Eagan. The Randolph Area Historical Society is a volunteer-run organization that is set to open a brand-new museum in Randolph, Minn. by 2025. The Rosemount Area Historical Society is a volunteer-run organization and partners with local entities to house exhibits and programs.

Timeline
Questions related to the RFP should be submitted to Matt Carter (matthew.carter@co.dakota.mn.us) by 5 p.m. on Friday, February 16, 2024.

Answers will be provided by Monday, February 19, 2024. Questions and answers will be provided to those consultants that asked a question, as well as posted on our website (www.dakotahistory.org/employment) for all to see.

Final proposals must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, February 23, 2024.
The consultant / consulting firm will be interviewed and selected between February 26 – March 5, 2024. An offer will be made by Thursday, March 7, 2024.

Upon successful grant funding award, the consultant will be expected to work from June 1, 2024 and conclude no later than May 1, 2025.

*The project is conditional upon receipt of grant funding*

**Project Background**

The Dakota County Historical Organizations have met and individually partnered on a variety of projects individually but have partnered together to create a Dakota County Semiquincentennial Plan (America’s 250th). This plan will allow each organization to coordinate a county-wide recognition of this historic event, as well as their own local community. The plan will be made available for other historic organizations to use in replicating their own efforts. A key component to this project will be getting input and making connections with Public & Private Stakeholders. The stakeholders can range from various ethnic groups within the communities, to civic groups that will have a stake in celebrating the 250th year.

The DCHO will rely on the experience of the Consultant to lead the discussion throughout the entire planning process. The end result will a plan that can be followed and may include (1) themes to be used, (2) exhibit ideas, (3) programming ideas, (4) and other outcomes as determined by the partners and the consultant. By bringing all the partners together, it will also allow for us to plan how we can celebrate this occasion, while also recognizing that not everything in the past 250 years is worthy of a celebration.

The consultant / consulting firm will be required to host approximately six meetings with Private and Public Stakeholders, which will be defined once the grant is awarded to DCHS and the project period begins. The Consultant will create a final Concept Plan deliverable, as well as assist with additional milestone reporting required by the Minnesota Historical Society’s grant requirements and attend meetings as required with the DCHO, stakeholders, and/or MNHS.

**Scope of Work**

Please note that the following scope of work will be completed on a schedule negotiated with the consultant upon contract award. The timeline can end earlier with approved plan.

1. Work with DCHO and assigned DCHS staff to determine what research exists for defined themes to be used in the plan.

2. Work with DCHS staff to complete any research identified as lacking related to themes, as needed, for the completion of a Concept Plan.

3. Identify future research needs that will be needed to complete subsequent phases of the Semiquincentennial Concept Plan.

4. Host six Stakeholder Groups (Private & Public) with identified community groups and key members of the community, as well as the general public to get feedback on what they envision for a celebration and recognition of the 250th.
a. There will be approximately three Private Stakeholder meetings with identified groups, agreed upon between DCHO and the Consultant
b. There will be approximately two Public Stakeholder meetings with identified public, civic groups, agreed upon between DCHO and the Consultant
c. There will be approximately one Public Stakeholder meeting within the county that the general public will be invited to attend

5. Assist with completing all milestone reports required by MNHS, as needed, throughout the project.

6. Attend meetings with DCHS staff throughout the project to update on progress, as well as MNHS as required throughout the project’s funding.

7. Complete a Semiquincentennial Concept Plan for the DCHO and include additional recommendations for the future implementation of the project.

8. Assist DCHS staff with final report to MNHS grants office.

**Required Written Deliverables**

1. Summary of Stakeholder Groups
2. Consolidation of research gathered, if includes outside repositories
3. Concept Plan for Semiquincentennial with suggested themes, exhibits, programs, etc.
4. Final report to be submitted to MNHS at conclusion of grant summarizing project and process

*Please note, with an awarded grant, deliverables may change as required by the granting organization’s requirement(s).*

**Project Budget**

Please provide a detailed budget and fee schedule to complete the project as outlined in the RFP. The anticipated Consultant budget for this project is $48,000. Please provide your budget and justification for the total expense, specifically if it exceeds the projected $48,000. The final Consultant’s proposal that is selected for the project will be submitted with the final DCHS grant application to MNHS for justification and proof of numbers in the final budget.

**Required Qualifications**

- A minimum of five years of experience as a museum professional
- Demonstrated knowledge of Minnesota history
- B.A. degree in History, Museum Studies, Public History, or related field
- Experience working in the museum setting, specifically with exhibits and programming

**Desired Qualifications**

- At least three years of experience as manager of a historic site, visitor relations, or exhibit design and implementation
- Knowledge of exhibit design principals and / or previous experience with programming
- Understanding of Dakota County history and its place in Minnesota history
- M.A. degree in History, Museum Studies, Public History, or related field
To Apply
Please submit the following to Matt Carter, executive director, DCHS, via email at matthew.carter@co.dakota.mn.us with the subject line stating, “Semiquincentennial RFP,” or send a hard copy to:

Dakota County Historical Society
ATTN: Matt Carter
130 3rd Avenue N
South St. Paul, MN 55075

Proposal Document: Address capacity and qualifications to complete the job successfully within the timeline provided. Maximum of two (2) pages.

Resume: Maximum of three (3) pages.

References: Provide a minimum of three (3) references or a current client list with contact information included.

Sample
Provide a sample (a) Concept Plan you created for a previous project, or (b) relevant exhibit that shows your qualifications to complete a Concept Plan that includes exhibits and programming suggestions.

Position open until filled, but primary consideration will be given to proposals received by 5 p.m. on Friday, February 23, 2024. Interviews with finalists can be expected to be conducted between February 26 – March 5, 2024. An offer is expected to be made by Thursday, March 7, 2024.