Newark Symphony Hall Strategic Vision & Brand Development RFP

**I. Introduction**

**Newark Symphony Hall: A Cultural Legacy Since 1925**

Welcome to Newark Symphony Hall, an enduring symbol of cultural richness and artistic expression in Newark, New Jersey. Born as the Salaam Temple in 1925, our venue, affectionately known as "The Mosque," has stood as a testament to the evolving cultural landscape of the region. Today, we have a variety of spaces that offer robust programming, including Sarah Vaughn Concert Hall (2800 theater style seats), Black Box (244 seats), Terrace Ballroom (1200 standing room/ 800 seated or can be used as a banquet space), White Box Studio (100 seats) and by the end of 2025, we will have our Arts Education space which will host 30,000 square foot multi use art space**.**

**Historical Background:**

Newark Symphony Hall has been the heart of arts and culture, evolving from its origins as the Salaam Temple into New Jersey's oldest and largest arts and entertainment venue. We will be celebrating 100 years in 2025 and are looking for a partner to help to bring our vision into the next century with us.

**Diverse Programming:**

Our events are as diverse as the state of New Jersey, from comedy to open mics to intellectual book talk series, our stages are programmed with something for everyone. In the past year, we have hosted MTV for a Hip Hop Unplugged, George Wassouf, Candlelight, Edgar Allen Poe Experience, All Stars Project Talent Show, Yiddish plays, television/movie filmings along with non-profit fundraisers and networking events. We are versatile and looking to continue to grow. We offer a variety of free programming for the community such as our annual Haunted Hall Trunk or Treat event in addition to parternships with the City of Newark for Artists Against Violence and an annual MLK Celebration.

**Cultural Impact:**

Newark Symphony Hall is not just a venue; it's a cultural hub that reflects the spirit of Newark, promoting artistic expression, community engagement, and inclusivity.

**Purpose of this Proposal:**

This proposal seeks to engage experienced agencies in the development of foundational documents that will guide Newark Symphony Hall's strategic direction, program narratives, and brand communication over the next three years.

**Key Objectives:**

1. Develop a comprehensive three-year strategic plan aligning with organizational priorities and guiding marketing and communications efforts effectively.
2. Create a compelling Programs Narrative that describes Newark Symphony Hall's diverse portfolio of programs and establishes each program's unique value proposition in the New Jersey and Newark arts ecosystem.
3. Formulate a Voice and Tone Guide serving as an introductory document for partners and vendors, establishing guidelines for brand culture, values, character, positioning, and personification

**II. Objectives**

The primary objectives of this RFP are:

1. Strategic Plan (Three-Year):
   * Develop a comprehensive strategic plan outlining the institution's strategic direction for the next three years.
   * Align the strategic plan to guide marketing and communications priorities effectively.
2. Programs Narrative:
   * Create a compelling Programs Narrative that describes Newark Symphony Hall's diverse portfolio of programs.
   * Establish each program's unique value proposition within the New Jersey and Newark arts ecosystem.
3. Voice and Tone Guide:
   * Formulate a Voice and Tone Guide that serves as a foundational document for the Newark Symphony Hall brand.
   * Outline clear guidelines for brand culture, values, character, positioning, and personification.
   * Orient partners and vendors to the brand's communication do's and don'ts.

**III. Scope of Work**

**A. Strategic Plan (Three-Year)**

1. Strategic Vision:
   * Collaborate with Newark Symphony Hall stakeholders to define a clear and inspiring strategic vision for the next three years.
   * Identify key goals, objectives, and performance indicators to measure success.
2. Stakeholder Engagement:
   * Conduct interviews and workshops with key stakeholders to gather insights and ensure alignment with organizational priorities.
3. Market and Competitor Analysis:
   * Conduct a thorough analysis of the market and competitors to identify opportunities, challenges, and differentiators.
4. Marketing and Communications Integration:
   * Align the strategic plan to effectively guide marketing and communications priorities.

**B. Programs Narrative**

1. Portfolio Exploration:
   * Engage with program leaders to understand the unique attributes and goals of each program within the portfolio.
2. Value Proposition Development:
   * Define the value proposition for each program, emphasizing their significance in the New Jersey and Newark arts ecosystem.
3. Narrative Craftsmanship:
   * Create a cohesive and compelling Programs Narrative that unifies the diverse offerings under the Newark Symphony Hall umbrella.

**C. Voice and Tone Guide**

1. Brand Foundation:
   * Define the brand culture, values, character, positioning, and personification of Newark Symphony Hall.
2. Communication Guidelines:
   * Establish clear communication guidelines for internal and external audiences, ensuring consistency and authenticity.
3. Partner and Vendor Orientation:
   * Develop an introductory document within the Voice and Tone Guide to orient partners and vendors to the Newark Symphony Hall brand.

**IV. Proposal Submission Requirements**

**A. General Guidelines**

1. Submission Deadline:
   * Proposals must be submitted between **September 9, 2024** and **October 28. 2024, before 11:59pm EST.**
2. Submission Format:
   * Submit proposals electronically in PDF format to the designated email address: **info@newarksymphonyhall.org.**

**B. Proposal Content**

1. Cover Letter:
   * Include a cover letter introducing the agency, key team members, and expressing understanding of Newark Symphony Hall's goals.
2. Executive Summary:
   * Provide a concise overview of the proposed strategies and key highlights of the proposal.
3. Agency Overview:
   * Detail the agency's background, experience, and expertise in executing successful marketing campaigns, especially in cultural and entertainment sectors.
4. Understanding of Newark Symphony Hall:
   * Demonstrate a clear comprehension of Newark Symphony Hall's historical significance, cultural impact, and mission.
5. Previous Work in Newark, NJ:
   * Showcase relevant past experiences within Newark and demonstrate an understanding of the local cultural landscape.
6. Foundational Documents Development:
   * Present a comprehensive plan for developing the three foundational documents: Strategic Plan, Programs Narrative, and Voice and Tone Guide.
7. Budget Allocation:
   * Clearly outline how the agency intends to allocate the budget across various activities and deliverables.
8. Timeline:
   * Present a feasible and realistic timeline for the execution of proposed initiatives.
9. Deliverable Samples:
   * Provide samples or examples of past deliverables, such as strategic plans, program narratives, and brand guidelines.
10. References:
    * Include relevant client references, especially those pertaining to foundational document development for cultural institutions.

**C. Submission Email**

1. Subject Line:
   * Use the subject line "Newark Symphony Hall Strategic Vision & Brand Development RFP Submission - [Your Agency Name]."
2. Email Body:
   * Include a brief overview of the proposal and key contact information.
3. Attachments:
   * Attach the proposal document and any additional supporting materials.

**D. Contact Information**

1. Key Contact Information:
   * Clearly list the name, title, and contact details of the key agency contact person.

**E. Questions and Clarifications**

1. Deadline for Questions:
   * Submit questions electronically in PDF format to the designated email address: [**info@newarksymphonyhall.org**](mailto:info@newarksymphonyhall.org) **by no later than October 8, 2024.**
2. Response Period:
   * Responses to questions will be replied to through email by no later than **October 15, 2024.**

**F. Evaluation Criteria Acknowledgment**

1. Confirmation:
   * Include a statement in the proposal confirming the agency's understanding and agreement with the provided Proposal Evaluation Criteria outlined in Section VI.

**G. Contact Information**

1. Key Contact Information:
   * Clearly list the name, title, and contact details of the key agency contact person for any communication regarding the proposal.

**V. Evaluation Criteria**

**A. Criteria Overview**

1. Understanding of Newark Symphony Hall (NSH):
   * The extent to which the agency demonstrates a profound understanding of Newark Symphony Hall's historical significance, cultural impact, and organizational mission.
2. Relevance of Previous Work in Newark, NJ:
   * The agency's ability to showcase past experiences within Newark and demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the local cultural landscape.
3. Experience and Expertise:
   * The agency's background, experience, and expertise in executing successful marketing campaigns, particularly in the cultural and entertainment sectors.
4. Strategic Vision and Planning:
   * The clarity and innovativeness of the proposed strategic vision for developing the Strategic Plan (Three-Year).
5. Programs Narrative Development:
   * The agency's approach to exploring and crafting a compelling Programs Narrative, including the development of unique value propositions for each program within Newark Symphony Hall's portfolio.
6. Brand Culture and Communication:
   * The agency's capability to define the brand culture, values, character, positioning, and personification within the Voice and Tone Guide.
7. Foundational Documents Development Plan:
   * The feasibility, creativity, and depth of the proposed plan for developing the three foundational documents: Strategic Plan (Three-Year), Programs Narrative, and Voice and Tone Guide.
8. Budget Allocation and Resource Management:
   * The clarity and appropriateness of the agency's proposed budget allocation for developing the foundational documents and effective resource management.
9. Timeline Realism:
   * The feasibility and realism of the proposed timeline for executing the initiatives outlined in the proposal.
10. Innovation and Creativity:
    * The level of innovation and creativity demonstrated in proposed strategies, especially in integrating marketing systems development and traditional/digital marketing initiatives.
11. References and Past Deliverables:
    * The relevance and quality of provided references, especially those related to foundational document development, and the samples/examples of past deliverables.
12. Alignment with Proposal Submission Requirements:
    * Adherence to the specified submission guidelines, including required components and format.

**B. Notification**

1. Announcement Date:
   * The selected agency will be announced on **November 19, 2024**, and all participating agencies will be notified accordingly through email.
2. Feedback Requests:
   * Agencies not selected are welcome to request feedback on their proposals within fifteen days after the announcement.

**VI. Budget**

**A. Overall Budget**

1. Total Budget Allocation:
   * Newark Symphony Hall has allocated a total budget of $40,000 for the agency selected to develop the foundational documents, including the Strategic Plan (Three-Year), Programs Narrative, and Voice and Tone Guide.

**B. Budget Breakdown**

1. Allocation for Foundational Document Development:
   * The $40,000 budget is intended to cover all aspects of the foundational document development process, including research, stakeholder engagement, content creation, design, and finalization.
2. Spending Categories:
   * Agencies are encouraged to provide a detailed breakdown of how they intend to allocate the budget across key spending categories, such as research, design, content creation, meetings, and any other relevant expenses.

**C. Invoicing and Payment Schedule**

1. Invoicing:
   * The selected agency will be required to submit detailed invoices for services rendered, clearly indicating the services provided and associated costs.
2. Payment Schedule:
   * Payments will be made according to an agreed-upon schedule, with specific milestones or deliverables triggering payment disbursements.
3. Budget Adjustments:
   * Agencies must seek approval for any proposed adjustments to the budget before incurring additional expenses beyond the agreed-upon scope of work.

**D. Transparency and Accountability**

1. Financial Reporting:
   * The selected agency will be expected to provide transparent and regular financial reports, detailing the expenditure of the allocated budget.
2. Accountability Measures:
   * Newark Symphony Hall values fiscal responsibility and expects the selected agency to implement cost-effective measures without compromising the quality of deliverables.

**VII. Timeline**

A. Project Duration

1. Commencement Date:
   * **On or before December 9, 2024.**
2. Project Completion Deadline:
   * **March 10, 2024.**

B. Milestones and Timeline

1. Project Kickoff - **December 9, 2024:**
   * Initiate the project and provide a detailed plan.
2. Strategic Plan Development – **January 13, 2025 or 14 days following the start date**:
   * Begin the development of the Strategic Plan (Three-Year), including stakeholder interviews, market analysis, and goal setting.
3. Programs Narrative Crafting **– Febuary 3, 2025:**
   * Shift focus to crafting the Programs Narrative, collaborating with program leaders, and defining unique value propositions for each program within the portfolio.
4. Voice and Tone Guide Creation – **Febuary 24, 2025:**
   * Initiate the creation of the Voice and Tone Guide, establishing brand culture, communication guidelines, and orientation content for partners and vendors.
5. Project Completion – **March 10, 2025:**
   * Finalize and deliver all three foundational documents to Newark Symphony Hall by the project completion deadline

**VIII. Contact Information**

For any questions, clarifications, or further information regarding this Request for Proposals (RFP), please contact: Email: [info@newarksymphonyhall.org](mailto:info@newarksymphonyhall.org)

Please ensure that all communications related to this RFP are directed to the specified contact person. Newark Symphony Hall appreciates your interest and looks forward to receiving your proposals.