



BOSTON
CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM

Request for Proposals
Boston Children's Museum
Architectural Services for Exhibit and Restroom Projects

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1. INTRODUCTION

Boston Children's Museum (BCM) invites firms to submit proposals to provide architectural services needed to:

- Demolish an existing exhibit and prepare the 3,750 square foot 3rd floor gallery for installation of a new exhibit broadly focused on construction;
- Renovate existing visitor restrooms located in this gallery (3rd floor) and existing visitor restrooms on the 2nd floor of the Museum; bidders are also requested to include an add-alt estimate for renovation of existing visitor restrooms on the 1st floor of the Museum.

For the New Exhibit: Concurrent with this scope of architectural services, BCM is working with a contracted exhibit Design-Build firm to complete the design, fabrication, and installation of all components for the exhibit. These components include architectural-scale environments and structures, mechanical and electronic interactive components, three-dimensional art installations, environmental murals, interpretive graphics and signage, permanent seating, and all other pieces that comprise the completed exhibit. Firms bidding on this RFP will need to coordinate closely with the designated Exhibit Project Manager and our exhibit Design-Build firm to ensure seamless integration and full functionality of exhibit components within the gallery.

For the Restrooms: Work on the restrooms will be coordinated by the designated Restroom Project Manager; and restrooms in the exhibit space (3rd floor) will also require close coordination with the Exhibit Project Manager and the Design-Build firm.

The selection process for this RFP will be based both on written responses, as well as on an interview (in person or via videoconference) with short-listed firms.

Proposals are due to Joel Reider, BCM's Director of Exhibit Design, by March 17 2025 at 12:00 PM EST, as detailed in [Section 7: Selection Schedule](#).

2. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

About Boston Children's Museum

Boston Children's Museum is the second oldest and one of the most influential children's museums in the world. Since its founding in 1913, BCM has been engaging children and families in joyful discovery experiences that instill an appreciation of our world, develop foundational skills, and spark a lifelong love of learning. The Museum's exhibits and programs emphasize hands-on engagement and learning through experience, employing exploration and play as tools to spark the inherent creativity, curiosity, and imagination of children. BCM's primary audience is children ages 0-10 and the adults in their lives, and we welcomed 420,000 visitors in fiscal year 2024.

About the New Exhibit

The following background information on work-to-date on the new exhibit is shared as context, and also because some of the goals for the exhibit and our intended audience may have implications for architectural choices made in the gallery.

Originally installed in 2003, our existing *Construction Zone* exhibit is one of the most popular spaces in the Museum. The exhibit redesign project (new name tbd) will result in the creation of a new 3,750 square foot permanent exhibit¹ that invites visitors to engage in the process of construction, which we define broadly to include everything from planning and architecture through to trades.

As part of our standard process for commencing an exhibit design project, an initial literature review was conducted (with focuses on gender, race, and demographics in construction, as well as topics such as STEM, building, construction, and spatial reasoning for young children). In addition, BCM conducted an evaluation of our existing *Construction Zone* exhibit, and solicited input from a variety of construction professionals and community groups to help inform our redesign plans. Through this process, BCM identified our target audience for the new exhibit as children ages 4-8 and their caregivers, with a specific emphasis on engaging girls and children of color as a key priority for the new space.

During concept development, the team created a "Dream/Design/Build" framework for the exhibit redesign that is intended to highlight the full process of construction and the many fields (from city planning to architecture to design to the trades) comprising construction. While the building aspect of construction (using your hands, tools, and machines to actually make structures) is innately engaging to many children, the inclusion of the dreaming and designing is intended to increase engagement among children (and caregivers) who might be more drawn to the artistic or social-emotional elements of

¹ Permanent exhibits at BCM remain in the Museum for 10+ years.

construction, such as drawing, imagining possibilities, and understanding the needs of community members. Work to date has resulted in the creation of the following main message for the exhibit:

We have the power and ability to dream up, design, and build things that make our world a better place. What we build affects people, animals, plants, and everything else around us.

Exhibit Space Project Description and Project Team

The Museum’s core team for this new exhibit includes our on-staff Director of Exhibit Design, Senior Director of Exhibits and Research, as well as a contracted Content Developer and Graphic Designer. Additional team members who will also contribute to this project include members of BCM’s visitor experience, education, collections, and facilities teams. The Museum has contracted a third-party exhibit Design-Build firm to complete the Final Design of the exhibit and perform all fabrication and installation. All architectural work on the project will be in close coordination with work performed by the Design-Build firm.

BCM’s Director of Exhibit Design will serve as project manager (“Exhibit Project Manager”) and designated point of contact for the Exhibit scope throughout this project.

The selected architectural firm will make all necessary modifications to building infrastructure to accommodate seamless installation of completed exhibit components (installation performed by Museum’s exhibit Design-Build firm). Coordinate as needed with the Exhibit Project Manager and Design-Build firm to ensure architectural work provides all necessary infrastructure and details, such as electrical and mechanical service, lighting, and finishes, as well as any needed code reviews and changes to HVAC and life safety systems, for successful installation and operation of these exhibit components in the gallery.

Architectural firms interested in bidding on this project will be provided BCM’s Design Development package upon request. To indicate intent to apply and gain access to these materials, firms should email Joel Reider, BCM’s Director of Exhibit Design, as detailed in [Section 7: Selection Schedule](#).

About the Restrooms

The Museum’s visitor restrooms are designed to meet the various needs of children and families, including adults with children in diapers, and children in the process of toilet training. Family groups with strollers use our restrooms, as do school groups with chaperones. On each floor of the Museum, there is at least one single stall, wheelchair accessible restroom—the “Family Restroom”. All restrooms have infant changing tables, and some have both adult- and child-height toilets. Many of our restrooms feature playful elements that connect with our audience.

Restrooms on the 1st floor of the Museum were updated during our 2007 renovation project, and restrooms on the 2nd and 3rd floor predate that project. Through this restroom redesign project, the Museum aims to upgrade the spaces, and make the amenities more user-friendly for our family audience.

Restroom Project Description and Project Team

Concurrently with the exhibit project, the Museum will renovate existing visitor restrooms in the *Construction Zone* exhibit gallery (3rd floor), as well as existing restrooms on the 2nd floor; the Museum may choose to renovate/upgrade existing restrooms on the 1st floor as well. The selected firm will develop a single design approach to be applied consistently to all visitor restrooms throughout the Museum, through final construction. The restrooms included in this project are:

- 3rd fl. Boys'/Men's (approx. 180 sf)
- 3rd fl. Girls'/Women's (approx. 170 sf)
- 3rd fl. Family (approx. 50 sf; single stall; wheelchair accessible)
- 2nd Fl Boys'/Men's (approx. 170 sf)
- 2nd Fl Girls'/Women's (approx. 180 sf)
- 2nd Fl. Family (approx 75 sf; single stall; wheelchair accessible)

Pricing for finish upgrades to the 1st floor restrooms to be included as an add-alt.:

- 1st Fl Boys'/Men's x 2 (approx. 230 sf and 170 sf; one is wheelchair accessible)
- 1st Fl Girls'/Women's x 2 (approx. 230 sf and 190 sf; one is wheelchair accessible)
- 1st Fl. Family (approx 100 sf; single stall; wheelchair accessible)

The Museum's core team for the restroom project includes members of BCM's Facilities Team, including contracted partners from CBRE (building engineering) and ACP (housekeeping), as well as our Exhibits Team. Work on the restrooms in the exhibit space (3rd floor) will require close coordination with the exhibit Design-Build firm. Additional team members who will also contribute to the restroom project include members of BCM's visitor experience and education teams.

BCM's Managing Director of Administration and Operations will serve as project manager ("Restroom Project Manager") and designated point of contact for the scope related to the restrooms throughout this project.

Across Both Projects:

Safety, Useability, and Durability: BCM is known for our high quality hands-on exhibits and spaces for children and families. Our exhibits and spaces need to be designed and built to last for 10+ years of hard and enthusiastic play, and our restrooms need to accommodate children ages 0-10 and adults. Plans and specifications must support safety, accessibility, and usability, as well as durability and ease of maintenance.

Design Language, Aesthetics, and Materials: BCM aims for our spaces to be inviting and inspirational for our visitors. The selected firm will work in coordination with Exhibit Project Manager and the exhibit Design-Build firm to ensure all necessary modifications to the exhibit space are made to support and integrate seamlessly with the exhibit design. Our restrooms should look and feel like they are designed for an institution that focuses on children and families. BCM seeks design solutions that include the use of sustainable material options.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

1. **Project management** (*for Exhibit Space and Restrooms*) - Provide overall project management through all phases of project to include: designate a point of contact for the duration of the project for communication and project coordination with the Museum; define processes for review and approvals of decisions and changes, to be mutually agreed upon and followed by Architect and the Museum; update and keep to budget and schedule; attend regular meetings with the Team for Exhibit design and additional regular meetings regarding restroom design during construction; and attend weekly construction coordination meetings with Museum and General Contractor for both projects;
2. **Field documentation** (*for Exhibit Space and Restrooms*) - Receive from BCM 3-D scans of the exhibit gallery and restrooms, and verify conditions in field and adjust provided data as necessary;

3. Design Development

Exhibit Space

- a. Receive and review exhibit design drawings at key milestones as design progresses;
- b. Review exhibit design for compliance with applicable codes and regulations; alert the Museum of any infractions, and work with the Team to arrive at solutions. Code compliance review will be inclusive of final design as well as all temporary barricades and closures required during construction;
- c. Develop demolition plan to prepare site for needed modifications/upgrades;
- d. Develop floor plan for entire exhibit space including entrance and exit doors, 3rd floor restrooms, mechanical/electrical rooms,
- e. Develop ceiling plan for entire exhibit space indicating any ceiling finishes, MEP, and FP equipment;
- f. Develop interior elevations for exhibit space, as needed;
- g. Research and recommend appropriate materials, systems, and hardware; finalize selections with the Museum;
- h. If needed, per architect's assessment, structural engineer to evaluate floor loading of proposed exhibit elements;
- i. Deliver cost estimate for construction of the Exhibit Space;

Restrooms

- j. Review restroom design for compliance with applicable codes and regulations; alert the Museum of any infractions, and work with the Team to arrive at solutions. Code compliance review will be inclusive of final design as well as all temporary barricades and closures required during construction;
- k. Develop demolition plan to prepare sites for needed modifications/upgrades;
- l. Develop floor and ceiling plans for restrooms, indicating any floor and ceiling finishes, MEP, and FP equipment;
- m. Develop interior elevations for restrooms;

- n. Research and recommend appropriate materials, systems, and hardware; finalize selections with the Museum;
 - o. Deliver cost estimate for construction of the restrooms;
- 4. Construction Documents** *(for Exhibit Space and Restrooms)*
- a. Conduct final review meeting with the Museum and exhibit Design-Build firm;
 - b. Finalize drawings based on review comments;
 - c. Prepare complete construction documents including applicable code review, legend, and symbols;
 - d. Create project-specific bidding instructions and forms, general project requirements, and materials specifications;
- 5. Bid/Permit** *(for Exhibit Space and Restrooms)*
- a. Draft the RFP for General Contractors for Museum to circulate;
 - b. Schedule and conduct pre-bid walkthrough with all bidders at the project site;
 - c. Respond to bidder-generated questions and issue clarification addenda;
 - d. Receive and compile bids, contact each bidder to de-scope their bid, review bid results with client;
 - e. Write Massachusetts-required chapter 34 permitting report for work on an existing building;
 - f. Compile and complete required construction affidavit(s);
 - g. Deliver a conformed set of stamped plans and specifications to the Museum and the selected GC; these should be in digital form, with printed full-size set(s) for permitting, full-size set(s) for Museum, and 4 half-size sets for the Museum and General Contractor;
- 6. Construction Administration** *(for Exhibit Space and Restrooms)*
- a. Attend weekly construction coordination meetings for the duration of the projects; record and distribute meeting minutes;
 - b. Perform construction progress reviews (at same time as job meetings);
 - c. Perform additional construction progress site visits, as mutually agreed upon by both parties;
 - d. Respond to contractor requests for information and prepare clarification sketches as needed;
 - e. Process and perform submittal reviews;
 - f. Process contractor applications for payment;
 - g. Perform reviews and amendments of contractor-supplied punch lists; perform reviews onsite until all punch list items have been completed;
 - h. Perform final reviews of jobsites;
 - i. Prepare required final construction control affidavits and project close-out documentation, including as-built documentation of spaces.

BCM WILL PROVIDE:

1. 3-D scans of relevant spaces.
2. For Exhibit Space, work to date for reference, including Exhibit Design Development package.
3. For Exhibit Space, design documents from Design-Build firm at key milestones as exhibit Final Design progresses.
4. Timely review and approval of milestone submittals through designated Museum Project Managers (as previously defined).

4. PROJECT TIMELINE**For Exhibit Space**

Final design documents from the exhibit Design-Build firm are scheduled for completion in June 2025, and our target for exhibit opening is February 2026. BCM asks bidders to outline a project schedule that achieves this target date for the Exhibit and 3rd floor restrooms—or, if our desired dates are not feasible, to outline a realistic schedule and completion date. BCM may require a pause between Construction Documentation and Bidding/Permitting, depending on fundraising.²

For Restrooms

The restrooms will be renovated in a phased approach as multiple floors of restrooms cannot be out of commission all at once. 3rd floor restrooms are to be completed at the same time as the Exhibit Space. 2nd floor restrooms to commence once construction is complete in the Exhibit Space. If the Museum elects to renovate the restrooms on the 1st floor, then construction would commence after construction is complete in the 2nd floor restrooms.

5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Responses should be submitted electronically as a PDF of the proposal package no later than 12:00 PM EST on March 17, 2025 (see Selection Schedule for details). Address all materials to:

Joel Reider
Director of Exhibit Design
Reider@BostonChildrensMuseum.org

Responses should be no more than 10 pages and should include:

1. Complete contact information;
2. Statement of interest;
3. Suggested project approach for Exhibit Space and Restrooms at each stage of the projects, including:

² At the time of issuing this RFP, BCM has secured 54% of our total project budget, which covers all of the Final Design phase and a part of Implementation. BCM will move ahead with Implementation once we have raised approximately two-thirds of the total budget. BCM is confident in current prospects and is committed to seeing this project through to completion.

- a. Projected project schedule/timeline for each stage; with notes on how the Exhibit Space and 3rd floor restroom timeline might be impacted by a pause for fundraising between Construction Documentation and Bidding/Permitting;
 - b. Specific proposed details for project management;
 - c. Specific proposed details about collaborating with the BCM Team;
4. Proposed main point of contact and key project personnel who will be directly involved, including any vendors and subcontractors, if known at this stage; include brief bios with relevant qualifications and descriptions of prior projects;
5. Assessment of the firm’s overall ability to devote necessary time and attention to this project, with specifics given for the main point of contact’s and key personnel’s workloads in addition to this project (e.g., number of other parallel projects, etc.);
6. A summary of no more than three recent projects with images and description of how each example relates to this project;
7. Three recent references citing previous project experience (name, phone, email);
8. Itemized project costs for the Exhibit Space and the Restrooms as follows (with estimates for all fees and reimbursables, and any notes on how the Exhibit Space and 3rd floor restrooms project budgets might be impacted by a pause for fundraising between Construction Documentation and Bidding/Permitting):
 - a. Architectural Services for Exhibit Space: _____
 - b. Architectural Services for 3rd floor Restrooms: _____
 - c. Architectural Services for 2nd floor Restrooms: _____
 - d. Alternate #1 - Architectural Services for 1st floor Restrooms: _____
9. Billing rates for Architect’s and Architect’s Consultants’ Personnel
10. Suggested payment terms and conditions.

6. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

BCM’s evaluation of proposals will be based on written proposals and interviews indicating:

1. Alignment of the firm’s portfolio, team, and proposal with BCM’s approach to and goals for our audience and exhibit;
2. Demonstrated experience with and capacity for the project , as well as overall project management (including communication and management of budget and schedule);
3. Comprehensive explanation of proposed costs, schedule, and services offered;
4. Interviews with finalists and reference checks (bidders to provide three references).

7. SELECTION SCHEDULE

RFP circulated	February 24, 2025
Submit request for BCM’s DD package and/or questions to BCM*	March 5, 2025 at 12PM EST
Response to questions circulated*	March 10, 2025
All proposals due at Boston Children's Museum	March 17, 2025 at 12PM EST
Notification of finalists	March 24, 2025
Conduct finalist interviews	March 27, 2025 ³

³ Please note that all finalist interviews will be conducted on one day only on Thursday, March 20th.

* Submit requests for BCM's new *Construction Zone* exhibit Design Development package and/or questions via email to: Joel Reider, Director of Exhibit Design (Reider@BostonChildrensMuseum.org). Responses to all questions will be circulated to all firms who submit questions or request the exhibit Design Development package.

8. GENERAL INFORMATION

Confidentiality

All respondents' submissions will be treated as proprietary information and will be used solely for the purposes herein. Should a respondent require its submission be returned, BCM will do so at the respondent's request and at the respondent's expense.

Copyright Ownership

The selected firm's services will be engaged and shall be rendered on a work-for-hire basis in favor of BCM for copyright purposes. In the event such services are not deemed to be on a "work made for hire" basis, then the vendor shall assign to BCM the vendor's entire rights, title and interest, including copyright, in and to anything created or developed by the vendor for BCM under any agreement concluded by vendor and BCM, including (by way of example and not of limitation) all original files or work files created by or in the possession or control of the selected vendor, and all patents, copyrights, trade secrets and other proprietary rights in the work performed by the vendor for BCM. The vendor shall cause any subcontractor or partner to do the same.

Union Contractors and Subcontractors

Because the new exhibit is broadly focused on construction, BCM may require that union General Contractors and Subcontractors be used on all aspects of this project.

Federal Funding

Some of the funding for this project may come from Federal sources. The selected Design-Build firm may be required to comply with certain Federal procurement policies, and certify in writing that it has not been suspended or disbarred from doing business with any federal agency.