

Request for Proposal—Waukesha Public Library Children’s Expansion Feasibility Study

Introduction

The Waukesha Public Library is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit interest from qualified consultants to develop a fundraising feasibility study proposal. The successful Firm/Consultant will provide expertise in determining the feasibility of running a successful capital campaign for the purpose of renovating and expanding the Library’s children’s space on the second floor.

Following completion of the feasibility study, the Library will determine whether to move forward with a capital budget request to the City of Waukesha, a capital campaign to raise private support and achieve the fundraising goal. If the feasibility study recommends a capital campaign, the Library Board of Trustees reserves the right at its sole discretion to continue with the selected Firm/Consultant or with another in planning, launching, and running such a campaign.

Feasibility Study Timeline

Milestone	Date
RFP Available	Monday, October 19, 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	Friday, November 20, 2026
WPL Reviews Proposals*	November 20-January 14, 2027
Successful Candidate Notified	Friday, January 15, 2027
Feasibility Study Begins	January, 2027
Study Completed and Report Submitted	May 14, 2027**

*The Library may choose to interview firms as part of the review process.

**Study completion date determined in partnership with Firm/Consultant.

Project Overview

The Waukesha Public Library was founded in 1896 through the support of a local women’s group. Over the decades the Library has been the beneficiary of private support, including a gift of \$15,000 from Andrew Carnegie to build the original library building in 1904, now a room in the current Library.

In 2005 the Library completed a renovation of its second-floor children’s area. Because of a lack of funding, the second phase of that project was postponed indefinitely. As a result of

that, the southern exterior second floor of the library looks unfinished, with nine large empty window bays. This project seeks to complete the second floor with an expanded children's program room, an outdoor second floor demonstration area, and an expanded early literacy play area.

In 2021 the Library conducted a capital campaign to help fund a complete renovation of the first floor of the library. During that campaign the library raised over \$1.1 million. That campaign helped build the Library's capacity to raise private support. The Library currently has an active fund at the Waukesha County Community Foundation. This project is meant to capitalize on earlier Library efforts and to expand the Library's use of private support.

The Children's area of the library is very popular with Waukesha library users. Nearly half of the Library's circulation of physical items are of children's materials in this section of the Library, despite being just 35% of the Library's physical collection. The current Children's Program Room can comfortably seat 75, but the library has averaged 80 for storytimes in 2026. The most popular storytime this year saw 106 people attending. The Children's room has a small early literacy play area that is also very popular.

Consequently, we have identified expanding the children's space in the Library as a priority in the coming years. To that end, we have worked with the Engberg Anderson architectural firm on schematic design and budgeting for an expansion to include a larger program room, an interactive play space, and an outdoor reading/program space on the second floor. Engberg Anderson provided a budget figure of \$5,250,000 for the project if it was started in 2028.

When the Library renovated the first floor in 2021, the City of Waukesha committed to provide 2/3 of the total cost in capital funding. The Library agreed to seek private funding of 1/3 to pay for the renovation. This was the Library's first capital campaign and greatly increased staff knowledge and Library resources for fundraising—qualities that should be helpful moving forward. Currently, the City would like an assessment of what private support the Library could raise, which will inform any upcoming decision on city support.

Currently, completed project tasks include:

- Predesign Study and Cost Estimate.
- Experience with an architect familiar with our goals.
- Conceptual renderings and floorplans of expanded children's area.
- Library Board of Trustees unanimous support.

- Experience working with the Waukesha County Community Foundation, which manages the Library's private funding.
- Qualified City support for a project, based on an accurate assessment of potential private support.

Scope of Work

The Fundraising Feasibility Study should address the following:

1. Assessment of the organization:
 - a. Needs and goals
 - b. Historical fundraising performance
 - c. Current financial health
 - d. Internal capacity to support a campaign (staff, volunteers, Board, infrastructure, etc.)
2. Informed case for support:
 - a. Why the campaign is necessary and how it will benefit the organization, its stakeholders, and the community at large
3. Community Study:
 - a. Economic conditions and forecasts
 - b. Demographic and psychographic profiles of potential donors
 - c. Potential community support for a capital campaign
 - d. Other fundraising efforts that might compete for donations
4. Summary of Stakeholder/donor interest in the project:
 - a. Board members
 - b. Community leaders and other key stakeholders
 - c. Potential donors
5. Identification and evaluation of potential major donors
6. A Feasibility Study Report based on the findings:
 - a. If the findings are positive, outline a plan for the campaign including:
 - i. Case for support
 - ii. Goals—including an estimated potential fundraising amount
 - iii. Timelines
 - iv. Staffing needs
 - v. Leadership structure
 - vi. Strategies for engaging donors
 - vii. Estimated costs of running the campaign
 - viii. Challenges to be addressed
 - ix. Next steps for campaign preparation and execution

Proposal Requirements

All proposals shall address the following. Answers to the following questions should only be submitted as part of the Microsoft Forms document available [here](#).

[\(Waukesha Public Library Children's Expansion Feasibility Study: RFP Form – Fill out form\)](#)

Project Experience/References:

- a. Describe a minimum of three relevant projects completed that are similar to this project, completed within the last five years.
 - b. List three clients for whom the Firm/Consultant has performed similar work with contact information.
2. Firm/Consultant Information:
 - a. Describe the Firm's/Consultant's history, ownership, organizational structure and fundraising philosophy
 - b. Provide office location and contact information
3. Team
 - a. Include proposed personnel for this project and their roles, with resumes.
 - b. Clearly identify the Project Manager for the project
4. Scope of Services:
 - a. Explain the process and project deliverables along with a timeframe for each item. Proposers are free to propose a different process they believe may provide a better outcome for the Library.
5. Fees
 - a. Include a total price for the study as well as a breakdown of costs.
6. General Information:
 - a. Disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
 - b. Provide a statement assuring the Firm/Consultant is not currently in violation of any regulatory rules, regulations, or litigation that may have an impact on the project.
 - c. Provide any other information that may help the Library evaluate the proposal.

Proposal Format

For the proposal to be considered, complete in full the Microsoft Forms questionnaire linked above. Additionally, submit resumes for the proposed personnel for this project and any other information you believe will help the library make an informed decision. Additional

documents must be no longer than 10 pages, excluding staff resumes. All responses must be received by the library by **Friday, November 20, at 5 pm CST**. Proposals become the property of the Library upon submission and are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Proposals may be either printed or electronic

Submit printed proposal to:

Bruce Gay, Library Director
Waukesha Public Library
321 Wisconsin Ave.
Waukesha, WI 53186

Submit electronic proposal (PDF) to:

Bruce Gay, Library Director
bgay@waukesha-wi.gov

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated and scored by the Waukesha Public Library Board of Trustees in its sole discretion based on the following criteria:

- 30% Quality and completeness of plan.
- 30% Experience and Quality of Similar Work.
- 30% Pricing and Value/ROI for Budget
- 10% Experience of vendor team personnel

The Waukesha Public Library Board of Trustees reserves the right to make the final decision on this RFP, including the right to award no contract at all. The Board may choose to conduct interviews of vendors as part of the selection process. The Board anticipates a decision no later than at its January 14, 2027 regular meeting.

Questions

Questions can be sent to Bruce Gay at bgay@waukesha-wi.gov.