

Request for Proposals Cafe Operator Springfield Museums

March 2024

Overview:

The Springfield Museums is seeking a cafe operator to run the Museums' Café and/or Bakery on Chestnut Street in Springfield, MA. The operator will ideally serve the Museum's existing patrons, draw new patrons to the Café, and positively impact the surrounding neighborhood and community. Currently, the Museums are prepared to enter into an agreement with a prospective operator. In addition, by request, the cafe operator might be selected to cater to other events at the museums.

Background on the Springfield Museums:

Springfield Museums' first freestanding museum building, the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, opened to the public in 1896 as a space devoted to sharing the beauty of global cultures with the people of Springfield. Today, that initial goal has expanded to include themes of innovation, STEM learning, and literacy acquisition across many disciplines, all intertwined with playful, transformative, and inspiring learning. Visitors benefit from permanent collections, changing exhibitions, educational programs, and special events at the **George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum** (1896), the **Springfield Science Museum** (1899), the **Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts** (1933), the **Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden** (2002), the **Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History** (2009), and **The Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum** (2017).

At the Springfield Museums, one admission grants access to all five museums. This unique interdisciplinary structure makes the organization the only one of its kind in Massachusetts. While one Museum, exhibit, program, or event might be why a visitor first comes through our doors, we often hear how much more our visitors experience once on our campus. Here, there is truly something for everyone to discover. Our daily visitors include babies, pre-school-aged children and caregivers, school-aged children and teachers, families, college students, adults, seniors, local clubs, and special interest networks. Springfield residents attend the Museums for free, and this allows for frequent repeat visitation, especially during school vacation weeks, summer break, and a host of annual community events, such as our holiday-time kick-off, The Lighting of the Quad, and the popular springtime event, The Festival of Flowers. Our robust education department works to provide memorable experiences for visitors, by augmenting our daily and special event/exhibit programming with frequent giveaways, demonstrations, and drop-in activities.

The ideal cafe operator will be a strategic collaborator, willing to take creative approaches to opportunities and challenges that arise, and who envisions Café operations as complementary to the Museums' services. Attentive, customer-oriented service to Museums' visitors and area residents is a must and the operator must provide consistency in food service quality.

The Café and/or Bakery at 91-97 Chestnut Street

The Café, located at 91-97 Chestnut Street, is approximately 2,500 square feet of open space. The color scheme of the interior, as well as the booths, shelving, tables, and chairs, have been selected by the donor who provided the funding for the renovation of the Café. Some of the decorations in the Café will be themed to the works of Springfield-born Dr. Seuss. His grandparents operated the Seuss Bakery in downtown Springfield and there are historical references to his family roots in the city within the Café. There is a full basement that was renovated as part of the upgrades to the building.

We are seeking an operator who can provide primarily vegetarian and plant-based fare in the Café. Many museum visitors seek light, healthy fare (soups, sandwiches, salads). Baked goods as well as beverage service (including coffee/espresso); pastries, desserts, and light snacks are popular during and outside the typical lunch period. There is a strong interest in serving ice cream during the summer months.

The Museums anticipates a strong business partnership with the cafe operator. With a creative, adaptable approach and flexible menu and pricing options, it is possible that the operator may be able to expand the food service over time to include other retail possibilities.

During the first year of the operation, the Museums will provide the space for a nominal fee to cover the cost of utilities and insurance. The operator will provide the equipment and supplies that will be used for their operation. After one year, the Museums will work together with the operator to evaluate the lease arrangement and explore opportunities.

Process

Site Visit: A facility walk-through is strongly recommended as a first step. Applicants may contact Anthony Surette, our VP of Finance (tsurette@springfieldmuseums.org or 413-314-6474) to schedule a time to visit the facility before submitting their proposal. If, after visiting the site, potential operators would like to pursue this opportunity, they should send in a written proposal to the Museums.

Proposal: Interested parties should submit responses to the following questions, sample menu(s), and any additional electronic attachments to Anthony Surette. One (1) hard copy must be sent to the Museums C/O Anthony Surette at 21 Edwards Street, Springfield MA 01103. Proposals should be prepared in such a way as to provide a straightforward, concise delineation of the proposer's capabilities to satisfactorily operate the Chestnut Street Café. The written plan for the Café operations should include sample menus, price ranges, types of food service, proposed business plan, and schedule for commencement of operations. Explain how your approach would benefit the Museums and the neighborhood. Outline how you envision the collaborative relationship between the Museums and your business could work. For example, if you have a following on social media, how will you work in tandem with the Museums to build a mutually beneficial brand identity?

Qualifications: A description of previous experience managing and operating similar food service operations including names and references (with contact information). Please describe your ownership structure including partnerships and/or key investors. Please also include disclosures related to any Department of Labor or Equal Rights Commission complaints and any current or previous (five-year) judgments, liens, or lawsuits.

References: A minimum of three (3) references are required. References with incorrect contact information will not count toward the required minimum.

Summary of Insurance Coverage: The prospective operator shall provide a summary of their current insurance coverage for Comprehensive General Liability Insurance, Automotive Liability Insurance, Professional Liability Insurance, Employment Practices Liability, and Worker's Compensation. The selected operator will be required to show proof of insurance with coverages and amounts acceptable to Springfield Museums. The Springfield Museums will be named additional insured on the operator's policies. Required insurance must be in place upon commencement of operations.

Signature: All proposals must be signed (digital signature accepted). A proposal may be signed by an officer or other agent of a corporate operator, if authorized to sign contracts on its behalf; a member of a partnership; the owner of a privately owned operation; or other agent if properly authorized by a power of attorney or equivalent document. All Proposers responding to this RFP do so entirely at their expense. There is no expressed or implied obligation by the Springfield Museums to reimburse any individual or firm for any preparation or materials costs incurred in submitting responses or for providing additional information even if requested by the Springfield Museums, including any legal, design, printing, food, administrative, or other costs associated with participating in any selection demonstrations, tastings, or interviews, including pre-contract negotiations and contract negotiations. This RFP does not commit the Springfield Museums to award a contract or to negotiate with any Proposer. The Springfield Museums reserves the right to negotiate with any Proposer, or to modify or cancel the RFP at any time. The Springfield Museums further reserves the right to reject any submittal that does not satisfy the requirements of this RFP or waive any minor irregularities in proposals submitted.

Collaboration: The Springfield Museums welcomes all questions and is open to exchanging ideas about how Chestnut Café will succeed.