

Letters of Interest/Qualifications for Blue Ridge Craft Trails Coordination Services

January 2020

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership, (BRNHA), based in Asheville, N.C., is seeking an independent contractor to provide administrative, coordination, events management, and regional communications services for the implementation of the Blue Ridge Craft Trails Initiative.

BRNHA is a federally designated 25-county region of Western North Carolina recognized for its nationally significant natural and cultural resources. The BRNHA Partnership is a 501(c) 3 non-profit charged with preserving, interpreting and sustainably developing music, craft, natural, agricultural and Cherokee heritage assets within the designated area.

BRNHA, in partnership with several partners, has embarked on a regional initiative to brand 25 Western North Carolina counties as must-see destinations for the best in traditional and contemporary craft. The project was established in spring 2017 with the implementation of regional listening sessions for craft artists and related businesses, the development of a Craft Trails web portal featuring 75 anchor sites throughout WNC, rack brochure, a North Carolina Visitor Center exhibit, market research, and marketing plan. With the support of the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, NC Arts Council and in-kind support from several regional craft institutions, BRNHA has completed these foundational components. Pilot projects in Clay, Cherokee and Henderson Counties have also been completed.

The Blue Ridge Craft Trails Coordinator will be responsible for the day-to-day coordination of the build-out of the project in 22 remaining counties while working with a regional team. Familiarity and understanding of traditional and contemporary craft in Western North Carolina will be a plus.

The selected individual will initially report directly to the Executive Director of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership, and will work closely with the Blue Ridge Craft Trails Curator, the BRNHA Program Manager, and BRNHA Communications Manager. The estimated start time for the contracted project is March 2.

This part-time contract is being funded through the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership and an Appalachian Regional Commission grant.

Blue Ridge Craft Trails Coordinator duties will include the following essential skills:

Database Management and Documentation:

- Provide assistance and online research
- Create and maintain a master database for potential and selected craft sites and community supporters
- Request, label, and upload photographs, video and profiles to Dropbox or Google Drive
- Manage all incoming data related to the project and create data folders
- Help organize and conduct site visits
- Draft profiles for selected sites
- Provide materials and data for grant applications and reports

Marketing and Communications (in partnership with the BRNHA Communications Manager):

- Create and distribute marketing materials via social media, including Facebook, Instagram, etc.
- Send out announcements to selected artists and sites
- Develop and implement a distribution plan for map brochures
- Edit profiles and help load profiles on Blue Ridge Craft Trails website
- Help develop itineraries that include the artists and other natural and cultural heritage sites for the website and for map brochures

- Help gather all materials for map brochures
- Support the marketing plan for the initiative

Partner Liaison and Administration (in coordination with the BRNHA Program Manager):

- Maintain contact with partners and funders
- Organize kick off meetings, workshops, update meetings, and other events and coordinate technology and hospitality needs of all meetings
- Coordinate Craft Trails Steering Committee meetings and Craft Advisors group by preparing agendas, meeting materials, completing meeting minutes and communicating with these committees
- Set appointments, prepare materials and provide follow up for sponsor and donor cultivations for the Craft Trails
- Support the preparation of Power Points and other materials for presentation to groups

Organization and Management Skills:

- Strong organizational and analytical skills and proven ability to coordinate projects
- Event management experience
- Ability to set realistic goals and work within budget guidelines and procedures
- Ability to multi-task, manage multiple projects, and follow through on projects from concept to implementation while maintaining attention to detail
- Must be self-directed, motivated and able to develop creative solutions and solve problems

Communications Skills/Interpersonal Skills:

- Excellent writing and verbal skills and the ability to communicate effectively across a variety of communications channels and in a compelling, concise and brief manner
- Good listener and ability to maintain confidentiality
- Passion for making a difference and appreciating the special culture of Western North Carolina
- Ability to work on a regular basis with a small team, through conference calls, emails, and in person, fostering positive relationships and good communications
- Ability to professionally represent BRNHA and the Blue Ridge Craft Trails at a variety of meetings from partners to elected officials

Technical Skills:

- Ability to work with graphic designers and printers as needed
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite including Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Ability to use a camera or electronic device to capture images and video
- Experience using content management systems such as WordPress and experience with email marketing programs such as MyNewsletter Builder or Mailchimp
- Ability to post engaging content on Facebook and Instagram

The contractor hired must be available for considerable day travel throughout Western North Carolina over the next year which will be reimbursable per federal standards. There may be need for overnight stays. Contractor must show proof of valid NC Driver's License and automobile insurance. Anticipated average number of hours per week will be 20-30 hours.

Interested parties should provide a cover letter and resume highlighting qualifications. Please send proposals to Angie Chandler, Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Director, at angie@blueridgeheritage.com.

Deadline for applications is February 12.