



Seattle Arts & Lectures
Request for Proposals for Strategic Planning Consultant
June 20, 2024

Project Overview

Seattle Arts & Lectures seeks a consultant to support the Executive Director, staff, Board of Directors, and key community partners in creating a new strategic plan to guide the administrative and programmatic direction of the organization for the next 3-5 years.

This individual or consulting team should be comfortable with and have experience in including staff, Board, and community in a strategic planning process. This individual or consulting team should be comfortable with, and have experience in including board, staff, Board, and community in a strategic planning process. We expect them to give and receive feedback, and share information clearly and transparently between these constituencies.. We aim to begin this work in October 2024 and have a completed strategic plan or framework finalized by the end of June 2025, ready for implementation beginning July 1, 2025.

The SAL team brings awareness, efficiency, and enthusiasm to this process, including a range of team members with experience in strategic planning. The E.D., staff, and Board have gone through strategic planning trainings, and have given survey and in-person feedback about what the team hopes to achieve from this plan. SAL brings a strong understanding of how to work effectively with external partners and enthusiasm for the process.

Location preference is Seattle and surrounding area, in order to work closely in-person with the SAL team and community.

Organization Background/Overview

Seattle Arts & Lectures (SAL) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Seattle, Washington. Founded in 1987, Seattle Arts & Lectures cultivates transformative experiences through story and language with readers and writers of all generations. Our work is guided by values of Belonging, Racial Equity, Trust and Transparency, Curiosity, and Joy.*

SAL annually serves over 50,000 youth and adults throughout the Puget Sound region and beyond with our public and youth programming. We strive to create spaces—on stage, online, and in classrooms—where all in our community feel valued and welcomed, and find joy and connection through the sharing of stories.

- **Mission.** Seattle Arts & Lectures cultivates transformative experiences through story and language with readers and writers of all generations.
- **Vision.** SAL envisions a future in which story and language continuously and courageously revitalize equity, justice, and belonging.
- **Values**
 - Belonging.** We believe access is core to belonging, and we bring an intersectional lens to breaking down historical and societal forces that create and enforce racial, economic, access, and geographic barriers. We strive to foster spaces where all community members feel valued, invited, and welcomed in a spirit of mutual inspiration and exchange.
 - Racial Equity.** We bring an anti-racist lens to all our programmatic and budgetary decisions to work against the historical and present-day effects of white supremacy. We prioritize, amplify, and celebrate the voices, stories, and lived experiences of writers and readers who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color in the community and beyond.
 - Transparency & Trust.** We build trust through transparency in our processes, decision-making, follow-through, and accountability. We prioritize thoughtful, intentional action; responsiveness over reactivity; and regular, open, and honest communication centered on community feedback.
 - Curiosity.** We cultivate curiosity—in our audiences, students, staff, and community members—by providing opportunities for wonder and learning that are rooted in humility and make visionary futures possible.
 - Joy.** We value the joy forged through individual acts of reading and writing and the connection and community created through the sharing of stories.

Strategic Plan History

At the end of FY 2025, SAL will come to the end of a 5-year Strategic Plan that was developed prior to COVID. The world, and SAL, have changed a great deal in that time. After years of adapting to the needs of the moment, we are excited to dream again of the future in a long-term way, and are looking for a partner to guide us in developing a strategic framework for the next 3-5 years (though it is possible that some 10-year dreams may also emerge from this process!).

We would like a process and plan that is inclusive of staff, Board, and community, which includes people we serve and those we don't yet serve. We would like a process that unites us and a plan that excites us. We would like to emerge next year with a strategic plan that feels uniquely SAL, mapped to our values and joy in our work.

Proposal Requirements

Please include the following in your proposal:

Company Information

- Provide name, address, website URL, and telephone number
- Include name, title, and e-mail address of the individual who will serve as primary contact
- Include biographies for any key staff who will be working directly with SAL
- Include a brief description and history of your firm

Project Approach

Please explain your project approach, style, and process. Describe how you work with staff, Boards, and community partners across a spectrum of positionalities. How do you bring people to consensus? How do you work through disagreement or dissent? How do you bring an equity lens to your work with strategic planning?

Cost

Proposals must include the estimated cost for all work outlined in the Timeline and Deliverables section.

Timeline and Deliverables

Proposals should include the proposed work timeline and deliverables. Required deliverables include:

- Meeting facilitation with staff, Board, & community partners over the course of planning
- Qualitative and quantitative data collection, reporting, and analysis
- Finished plan with highlighted top-level goals for external use and publication (SAL will facilitate design of materials independently).
- Finished plan with Board and Staff including concrete, tactical goals for internal development of work plans
- Clear evaluative methods, so that progress towards achieving goals can be accurately assessed

Experience and References

Please provide sample work for no more than (3) three relevant projects with similar scope and size that have been completed or are currently in progress by the proposed consultant or team. All (3) three of the projects listed must be for non-profits. Please provide references from at least two previous strategic planning projects.

Questions?

Please contact Executive Director Rebecca Hoogs (rahoogs@lectures.org) by August 16, 2024, with any questions you may have regarding the project or RFP.

Deadline

Please submit your proposal to Director of Finance and Operations, Mary Dwyer (mdwyer@lectures), by August 16, 2024.

Hiring Schedule

- Interviews conducted with finalists – September 2024
- SAL announces decision – by October 1, 2024
- Consultant begins work – October 2024