

TOLEDO LUCAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR

STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTING SERVICES

Dated: Monday, April 20, 2026

Project Owner: Toledo Lucas County Public Library

Project Name: 2027 TLCPL Strategic Planning Consulting Services

Project Location: 325 North Michigan Street, Toledo, Ohio, 43604

Deadline to Submit Proposals: 12:00 p.m. (noon) EST, Friday, May 22, 2026

OVERVIEW

The Toledo Lucas County Public Library (TLCPL) is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to develop a new, comprehensive three to five-year strategic plan that includes...

1. A slightly revised or refreshed mission, vision, and values.
2. A slightly revised set of institutional underlying beliefs and behavioral ground rules.
3. Refreshed “team tools,” ranging from inclusive language, internal comms flow, learning work flow, etc.
4. And three to five clear and concise strategic priorities with measurable objectives and associated key performance indicators.

Please request “The TLCPL Way” staff edition for full context of the above by emailing “leadership@toledolibrary.org.” TLCPL hopes to engage submitters who demonstrate a clear track record of designing strategic plans for large, complex, and, preferably, public institutions.

BACKGROUND

Since 1838, TLCPL has proudly served local residents within the greater Toledo/Lucas County area—[see historical timeline](#). Today, TLCPL has 19 locations, plus mobile services, seeing over two million visits each year, while engaging more than 290,000 cardholders, circulating millions of physical and digital materials, and offering 5,000 free programs for all community members, from infants to older adults. Additionally, in 2024, Lucas County voters approved a \$153 million capital bond issue, allowing TLCPL to renovate and/or expand its current footprint, with major redevelopments taking place in Holland, Washington Township, Maumee, and West Toledo, and two new locations coming to Whitehouse and South Toledo to consolidate the Toledo Heights and Heatherdowns Branches.

Currently, TLCPL is operating under its 2021-2026 strategic priorities plan and roadmap (more information below). Although TLCPL offers a myriad of services

to meet the diverse information needs of community members, it is clear that literacy, in all its forms (reading, digital, etc.), remains not only one of Lucas County's most pressing issues but also is of national concern.

- *“What’s caused [reading scores to drop](#) to the worst point in decades?”*
- *“Reading skills of 12th graders [hit a new low](#)”*
- *“Report cards for Ohio’s class of 2024 show math marks went up but [reading scores slipped](#)”*

In addition to the unique discoveries of the consultant during this strategy and planning process, TLCPL looks to be “All in for Literacy” in 2027 and beyond, creating both an institutional and community-wide rallying cry to improve literacy in all its forms over the duration of this next strategic plan.

CURRENT STRATEGIC PLAN

TLCPL’s 2021-2026 strategic roadmap is available by request. A full outline of “The TLCPL Way” staff edition can be sent by emailing leadership@toledolibrary.org.

PROJECT ENGAGEMENT & RESOURCES

To facilitate the creation of TLCPL’s new strategic plan, the consultant will engage with the following groups. Frequency and exact engagement tools will be determined by the consultant in their returned proposal. Internal and external groups to be engaged are...

- Key internal TLCPL staff via in-person focus groups and digital surveys.
- External TLCPL community partners and trusted community leaders via phone interviews and digital surveys.
- External TLCPL patrons via digital surveys, or, if possible, phone interviews/in-branch interviews.
- TLCPL leadership team and “TLCPL core project team” (both internal)
 - Engagement with these two groups will be ongoing for both project logistics and general project progress reports. These two groups will

also serve as quasi-focus groups and “consultation groups” for the consultant in their approach to the work.

All external and internal raw data from in-person/phone interviews or surveys will be returned to TLCPL, along with accompanying summaries and polished reports of key takeaways/findings, which will be delivered to the leadership team and the TLCPL core project team.

Additionally, the consultant will have access to any necessary TLCPL program data or general institutional usage data to further assess performance and provide a perspective on “where we are” and “where we need to go,” aligned with the strategic plan's direction. Personal customer information is protected and will not be shared.

DELIVERABLES

The consultant will create a clear and comprehensive timeline from project start to final deliverables, including all necessary internal and external engagement touchpoints, key milestones, required meetings, check-ins, etc. To accompany the timeline, the consultant will also develop an engagement plan(s) for each engagement opportunity, which should be tailored to the internal and external group(s).

At the conclusion of the project, the consultant will deliver the following to the TLCPL core project team and TLCPL leadership team in a polished digital and printed “work book” or “guide” for internal staff consumption...

- A high-level strategic plan, which includes a slightly revised or refreshed mission, vision, and values; a revised set of underlying beliefs and ground rules; and 3-5 clear and concise strategic priorities. For each strategic priority, the following will be articulated:
 - Key messages (i.e., why the priority is important to pursue for TLCPL/the taxpayers of Lucas County)
 - Important factors/considerations for each priority (i.e., what needs to be addressed/considered in pursuing the priority)

- Measurable objectives for each priority (i.e., how will the priority be achieved)
- Key Performance Indicators for each priority (i.e., quantifiable and time-bound metrics that will be utilized to measure the success of the outlined objectives for TLCPL over the 3–5-year period)
- A refreshed guide/framework for “team tools”, which are outlined in section two of “The TLCPL Way.” The applicability, reuse, or creation of new team tools will be determined by the TLCPL leadership team and “TLCPL core project team”
- An interactive, accessible tool (such as an Excel sheet or similar) that allows TLCPL to track associated KPIs for each objective, which are then linked to each strategic priority.
- Written and visualized data summaries for internal and external groups that were engaged in/surveyed this process.
- All raw data from internal and external engagement opportunities throughout the life of the project.
- Present the plan to TLCPL leadership, TLCPL core project team, TLCPL staff, and TLCPL Board of Trustees.

ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE, 2026

- April, call for consultant proposals
- May, consultant proposal review and consultant selection
- June, onboarding/scheduling/logistics coordination with consultant
- June-September, internal and external feedback solicitation
- September-October, collating and synthesizing data
- October-November, finalize mission, vision, and values; finalize a revised set of underlying beliefs and ground rules; and finalize 3-5 clear and concise strategic priorities; finalize refreshed team tools.
- December, final report and deliverables presented to internal TLCPL groups, as well as the Board of Trustees.

**Schedule is approximate and able to flex if needed for the successful proposal.*

ANTICIPATED BUDGET

The anticipated budget for TLCPL's strategic planning consultation services must range from \$30,000-\$50,000.

CONSULTANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Within the proposal, the consultant must include their resume and a summary of their background, qualifications, and examples of relevant client experience. The consultant must demonstrate and communicate experience in creating, managing, and facilitating strategic planning processes, preferably alongside public libraries or large, publicly funded institutions serving the community.

The consultant will also need to provide the names and contact information for at least three references from comparable projects.

If there are additional project leads/managers or subcontractors with whom the consultant will be involved in the project, their resumes and a summary of their background, qualifications, and relevant client experience must also be included.

COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

Those submitting a proposal may submit any comments or questions concerning this RFP in writing during the proposal preparation period. Verbal responses to questions, at any time, are not official, and TLCPL shall not be bound by such information. Proposers should not seek to discuss any information relating to this procurement with any TLCPL employee or anyone affiliated with the project, outside of the contact below. Violation of this provision may result in disqualification from eligibility for selection. Comments or questions must be submitted no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon), May 22, 2026, in writing by email to leadership@toledolibrary.org.

Responses to requests for information that are unique to a proposer's team or approach to the project may be provided only to that proposer. However, should a response require a modification to the RFP, as determined by TLCPL, it

will be made in the form of a written addendum that will be sent to all proposers and will become part of the RFP. Each proposer is required to acknowledge receipt of all addenda at the time of submission (noon, May 22, 2026).

All responses to this RFP shall be prepared with full consideration of the addenda issued prior to such response.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

Reference documents, i.e., "The TLCPL Way" are available upon written email request to leadership@toledolibrary.org.

INTERVIEWS AND EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

A TLCPL evaluation committee will evaluate the proposals based on the respondents' demonstrated understanding of the scope, their ability to meet the outlined deliverables, and their relevant experience, as reflected in their responses to this RFP. In performing the evaluation, the committee may request additional information or clarification. The TLCPL evaluation committee will recommend that the highest-ranked proposal be awarded the project. TLCPL reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject the evaluation committee's recommendation and to cancel the RFP process in its entirety, in accordance with Ohio Law.

Any attempt to influence any member of TLCPL with regard to this RFP prior to the selection/decision will be grounds for disqualification.

TLCPL will not conduct debriefing or other feedback meetings with proposers that are not selected.

AGREEMENT AND SUBCONTRACTS

Upon submitting your proposal, please include any contractual terms and conditions or a draft agreement for review.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Please know that anything submitted during this RFP process is not confidential, and as TLCPL is a public institution, records are and can be subject to public information requests.

Proposals will be reviewed by TLCPL's Executive Director/Fiscal Officer, the Chief of Staff, and members of the TLCPL evaluation committee. Proposals that are unfinished, fail to respond to the needs above, contain errors, or are submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Returned proposals must be emailed, in PDF format, by **May 22, 2026, 12:00 p.m. (noon) EST** to...

Lucas Camuso-Stall, Chief of Staff
E: lucas.camuso-stall@toledolibrary.org
CC: leadership@toledolibrary.org
O: 419-259-5381

If the consultant is experiencing submission issues, please call or email the Chief of Staff. A confirmation receipt will be sent once the submission has been received. To ensure that TLCPL's selection process is fair, general requests for appointments to meet, outside of direct questions for clarification, will be declined.

If the consultant/proposal demonstrates knowledge, skills, and experience in conducting strategic planning projects for public libraries and/or other large community-serving organizations; shows a clear methodology or framework for carrying out tasks in this request; outlines reasonable proposed fees within the budget; has a satisfactory performance record, the consultant will be progressed to an interview with TLCPL's Executive Director/Fiscal Officer, Chief of Staff, and key leadership members.

DISCLAIMERS AND DISCLOSURES

EXPENSES OF THE PROPOSERS

TLCPL accepts no liability for the costs and expenses incurred by the proposers in responding to this RFP, responding to clarification requests and discussion meetings, preparing resubmittals, potential interviews, subsequent negotiations, and any other activities included as part of this procurement process. Each proposer shall prepare the required materials and submittals, and attend meetings and interviews, at its own expense, with the express understanding that it cannot make any claims whatsoever for reimbursement from TLCPL for costs and expenses associated with the process. TLCPL, at its sole discretion, may request that a proposer resubmit their proposal to correct any deficiencies identified.

COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS

Materials purchased for use or consumption in connection with the proposed work will be exempt from the State of Ohio Sales Tax, as provided in Section 5739.02 of the Ohio Revised Code, and also from the State of Ohio Use Tax, as provided in Section 5741.01 of the Ohio Revised Code. TLCPL will provide the tax-exempt certificate upon request.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE TO THIRD PARTIES

All proposals received in response to this RFP will become the property of TLCPL and will not be returned.

Again, the proposer acknowledges that TLCPL is a public entity subject to Ohio's Public Records Act. If the proposer claims that any financial information submitted to TLCPL is exempt from disclosure under Ohio's public records act, then the proposer shall conspicuously mark on the record "CONFIDENTIAL" and include in a cover letter or transmittal an explanation, citing legal authority, of the basis of the claim. TLCPL reserves the right to reject the proposer's position and produce said documents if it determines disclosure is required by law. In the event of a dispute with any third party requesting such records, the proposer

shall undertake the defense of TLCPL at the proposer's own expense and hold harmless and indemnify TLCPL for any damages, penalties, fees, or costs that TLCPL may incur as a result of such a dispute.

Proposers, by submitting their proposals, expressly acknowledge and agree that TLCPL will not be responsible or liable in any way for any losses that the proposer may suffer from disclosure of information or materials to third parties, including the disclosure of information or materials in response to a public records request.

THANK YOU

We sincerely thank you for your time and careful consideration.

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