



February 1, 2024

The Riley County Historical Society (RCHS) requests proposals from qualified consultants for organizational assessment and strategic planning. With the hiring of a new museum director in 2022, the first new director in more than 30 years, and the election of many new board members, RCHS seeks to better understand its present and past as we craft a plan that will guide our decision-making for the next seven years. We seek a thoughtful and experienced partner who can work with us as we clarify our mission and goals, how we want to reach these goals, and how we can best achieve them in partnership with the Riley County Historical Museum and other stakeholders.

Scope and Goals of Project

Among other possible deliverables, we expect a written plan that addresses the following:

1. Assess the society's status, including governing documents, relationships, mission, responsibilities, recent activities and achievements, and assets of all kinds.
2. Decide and articulate what RCHS is to be, who it is to serve, and what it is to achieve.
3. Compare the desired organizational identity and mission to what we are now and honestly determine what must be done to close the gap between the two.
4. Identify ambitious but attainable, concrete, short-term (3, 5 and 7 years) goals that will drive board decision-making, especially regarding budgeting, hiring, programming, and property management.
5. Imagine a long-term (15 year) vision for the organization that inspires members and donors.

The board seeks to consider a variety of planning models and methods and encourages submissions that leverage the best talents of the consultant while considering our needs. We expect the process to directly engage as many stakeholders as possible, in consideration of our current and desired audiences, and the board is committed to spending time and financial resources needed for successful planning.

RCHS Stakeholders and Audiences

Primary stakeholders:

- RCHS board
- RCHS members with a record of active involvement or giving or a future propensity for either

Secondary stakeholders

- Museum director and staff
- Museum trustees
- Riley County commissioners
- Kansas Historical Society staff leaders

Key Audiences

- Riley County residents who have traditionally been highly engaged in our programming, most notably schoolchildren
- Riley County residents who belong to identity groups that we seek to engage but who are currently underrepresented among our membership

Organizational History and Context

RCHS is a nonprofit dedicated to collecting, preserving, and presenting the heritage of Riley County and the State of Kansas and supporting, advocating for, and promoting an interest and awareness of our local history and the Riley County Historical Museum for the benefit of all.

RCHS was founded in 1914 and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Kansas. In 1915 the Society built the Pioneer Log Cabin in Manhattan City Park and opened its first Museum there in 1916. In 1957 the Museum was moved to the basement of Manhattan City Hall, where it remained until 1977 when a new Museum was built at 2309 Claflin Road in Manhattan as a bicentennial project. The Museum became a Department of Riley County in 1977, but the collection and properties: Pioneer Log Cabin, Wolf House Historic Site (the Wolf House, Mansfield House, Moses House and Wolf Studio), Randolph Jail, Hartford House, and Rocky Ford School remain part of the RCHS.

In 1996, the Riley County Historical Society and Riley County (through the Riley County Historical Museum) entered a partnership with the Kansas State Historical Society for the operation and support of the Goodnow House State Historic Site. The RCHS works with Riley County in support of the Riley County Historical Museum, and the Museum staff administers the RCHS collection and provides professional expertise and advice in the administration of the RCHS buildings, properties, and programs. This partnership continues to the present. The first Museum director was Winifred Slagg, who served from 1957 to 1971. Jean C. Dallas was director 1971-1987, Cheryl Collins was director 1988-2021, and Katharine Hensler has been director since 2022.

Learn more about the society and its board at <https://www.rileychs.org/>

Timeline

The RCHS board will begin **review of proposals on March 1**. We are prepared to begin the project as soon as a consultant is contracted. We envision a four-month process from start to receiving final deliverables.

Proposal Submission

We encourage creativity in submitted proposals. No matter the medium, proposals should take no more than 15 minutes to review carefully. For example, five printed pages, a roughly equivalent website, or a ten-minute video or online presentation will suffice.

The following information will be most helpful in our review:

- Narrative explanation and step-by-step timeline of a proposed process
- Short summary of recent work conducted for an organization similar to RCHS
- References who can speak to the nature and quality of your work
- Total projected budget
- Brief history of yourself, your organization (if applicable) and who will work on the project
- Clear contact information for us to follow-up as needed.

Submit proposals to RCHS President Debbi Thompson at RCHSinfo@rileychs.org.

Email questions to Colene Lind, colenejean@gmail.com.