

Request for Proposal (RFP)
RE: CEO Executive Recruitment Consulting Services
Grand Rapids Public Museum

Proposal Due Date:
March 6, 2026

Introduction

The Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) employs approximately 120 employees (54 FTEs and 66 PTEs), along with 115 volunteers. The GRPM is one of the oldest and largest museums in the state of Michigan. It is highly acclaimed as one of the most prominent institutions in West Michigan with a focus on history, science and culture. It was the first museum in the country to receive National Museum Accreditation, a designation it maintains to this day.

Located in Grand Rapids, Michigan - the state's second-largest city - the Grand Rapids Public Museum was founded in 1854, just four years after the city itself. Since then, the GRPM has grown into the region's largest repository of historical and cultural artifacts and scientific specimens. More than 98% of its 280,000-item collection has been donated by the community, collectively telling the story of Grand Rapids and West Michigan.

The Museum is dedicated to its mission as an educational institution striving to make knowledge accessible to all: *We exist to be a living monument of artifacts, ideas and stories told through exhibitions, events, and educational programming designed to inspire, motivate and celebrate our human bond. We enrich the lives of our community through experiences of the wider world in a uniquely Grand Rapids context.*

And to its vision: *To inspire passionate curiosity and a deeper understanding of the world around us.*

The GRPM expands its impact through innovative exhibits, engaging community programs, and dynamic public-private partnerships with individuals, businesses, universities, and nonprofit organizations.

For more details on the GRPM's Strategic Plan and ongoing activities, please visit our website: www.grpm.org. All of these collective efforts by the GRPM promote greater awareness of the rich history of the people who migrated to this region, deepening understanding of their journeys and stories. The meaningful permanent exhibits the Museum has invested in over the years also reflect a deep respect for the cultural history of the original people who inhabited the state. Through intentional relationship-building in the community, its role as a rich and inspiring educational institution, the implementation of innovative technological strategies, and a demonstrated commitment to stewardship of the Grand River - whose banks it lies on, the GRPM has become a world-class museum and a vital partner in West Michigan's cultural arts landscape.

Without a doubt, many of the GRPM's successes are due to its dynamic leadership and highly talented staff and volunteers. Additionally, the organization's unwavering commitment to its goals is a major key to its success.

The Museum has received incredible support from the community. Unlike some museums, whose attendance has continued to suffer since the COVID-19 pandemic, visitor attendance at the GRPM remains impressively high - averaging 200K+ attendees each year.

The departing CEO has served the Museum since 2008, successfully navigating major challenges, including the financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. A key part of his legacy is the Museum's enhanced financial stability, achieved through the establishment of a Grand Rapids Public Museum High School and Museum Middle School, and the securing of a 10-year public funding millage (up for renewal in 2026). His retirement will come after the renewal millage vote in November of this year.

To facilitate the recruitment process, the Museum Board of Trustees is looking for an experienced executive recruitment firm that has demonstrated success in the recruitment and selection of a highly qualified leader for a business or organization. The selected firm will partner with our internal subcommittee to select a committed, talented leader who aligns with the Museum's mission, values, and strategic goals, and can effectively lead the Museum's future success as a legacy institution in the community.

Scope of Work

The selected firm will be responsible for the following scope of work.

- Collaborate with the Search Committee Team to refine the CEO job description and develop a recruitment strategy targeting diverse, high-caliber candidates.
- Conduct outreach, screening, and preliminary interviews.
- Present a shortlist of the most highly qualified candidates with detailed profiles.
- Assist with interview coordination, perform reference and background checks, and assist with the offer and negotiation of an employment contract.
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism throughout the process.

Proposal Requirements of the Consultant

Proposals should be submitted in an electronic format, along with seven (7) hard copies to be delivered by the deadline above, and should include the following information:

- **Firm Overview** - history, size, areas of recruitment specialization.
- **Relevant Experience** - examples of successful CEO or senior executive placements.
- **Describe the firm's research and knowledge about the Grand Rapids Public Museum** - provide an explanation of the firm's ability to be a good fit as a recruitment partner to work with the GRPM's subcommittee.
- **Proposed Approach & Timeline** - Please describe the firm's methodology to conduct successful CEO and executive searches. Briefly describes the firm's ability to meet required deadlines.
- **Team Qualifications** - Provide a short bio(s) for each of the key consultants or representatives that would be assigned to this recruitment project.
- **Fee Structure** - The HR Department of the GRPM will work with the Firm in part to help defray some of the costs associated with an executive recruitment project. That notwithstanding, please explain the firm's pricing model, payment schedule, and any additional fixed or indirect costs associated with the firm's recruitment processes.
- **References** - Please provide the names of two to three recent clients from comparable executive searches to allow for reference checks on your firm's quality of work and professionalism (contact information is required for reference checks).
- **Claims or Lawsuits** - Has the firm or its lead consultants been sued or had a complaint filed against it in the last 7 years? If so, please advise as to the nature of the complaint or lawsuit and provide information on the status of the matter.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following metrics:

- Demonstrated experience with CEO/Executive recruitment searches
- Understanding of the GRPM and the Cultural Arts & Business sector of Grand Rapids
- Quality and clarity of the proposed recruitment methodology
- Caliber of the representative(s) assigned to work on the recruitment project
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in candidate sourcing
- Fees, cost-effectiveness, and value proposition

The initial evaluation of bidders for interviews will be based on the information provided above. Firms selected for an interview will be notified of the dates and may receive requests for additional information.

Timeline

- Proposal Submission Deadline: March 6, 2026
- Firm Begins Search: June 8, 2026
- **Target Start Date for new CEO: January 1, 2027**

Contact Information

For more information about this RFP, please contact:

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Additional Information

Reservation of Rights:

- Grand Rapids Public Museum reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
- Grand Rapids Public Museum is not obligated to award a contract to the lowest-priced proposal.
- Grand Rapids Public Museum may negotiate with any or all proposers before making a final decision.

Confidentiality

All information provided in this RFP and during the selection process must remain confidential.