

**Town of Stratford**

**RFP #2014-023**

**AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE  
FESTIVAL THEATRE**

**Operator**

**INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW**

**ABOUT THE THEATER**

The Connecticut General Assembly established the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre as a nonprofit educational corporation in June of 1951. Ground was broken in 1954 and the theater officially opened in 1955 creating a legacy of exciting work by many of the world's most prestigious theater artists. In addition to classical works, a variety of performing arts events filled the 1,534-seat auditorium over the years. In 1959, the Theater began to serve as an educational forum for young people and since then, more than 1.5 million students have been exposed to Shakespearean works.

The State of Connecticut transferred the theater's deed to the Town of Stratford on February 8, 2005. The theater is presently closed as the Town re-organizes efforts to reopen the theater.

# OPERATOR RFP

## Qualifications of the Operator or Operating Team

The Town of Stratford has outlined the following criteria for the hiring of an OPERATOR regarding the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre.

- A proven, successful track record of for-profit and/or non-profit management leadership.
- Ability to work in partnership with Administration, Council Members, Stratford, CT. volunteers and/or their designees.
- Direct experience in fundraising, raising operating capital, hiring and supervision of development staff. Must have a proven track record in raising program awareness.
- Savvy audience development and marketing instincts and the ability to successfully develop and implement earned income strategies.
- Must have an appreciation of theatre for youth and educational programs.
- Proven experience working with building contractors, developers and Town officials to ensure the safe and viable development of the complex.
- Must have experience in fundraising, budget management, marketing, supervising staff and working with a non-profit board.
- Ideal candidate will have excellent verbal and written communication skills, organizational and analytical abilities, strong interpersonal skills, and work well in a dynamic, deadline-driven environment. Grant writing experience (corporate and foundation-based) also desired.
- Be able to demonstrate financial wherewithal and fundraising ability to maintain and operate a theatre operation.

## **Description:**

### **American Shakespeare Festival Theatre Operator**

#### **Overview**

The Operator, in consultation with the Town, the Town's designees, community volunteers and other theatre professionals will consult with the Town and may, if agreed upon, operate the Theater.

#### **General Scope of Responsibilities**

The Operator will provide a Chief Operating and Financial Officer of the organization, and in cooperation with Town of Stratford designees, will provide executive leadership for the organization as the institution develops. The Operator will oversee all financial, personnel, marketing, development, front of house, and sales functions. He/she is responsible for guiding the organization to meet annual and long-term revenue goals and for guiding the organization and implementation of the annual budget. He/she is responsible for maintaining the strength of its Board of Directors and coordinates Board member orientations, communications and processes in cooperation with the Town of Stratford or its designees.

#### **Reporting Relationships**

The Operator will enter into a written agreement for the operation of the theater with the Town.

#### **Specific Duties**

The Operator should be capable of overseeing the operation of an organization, which meets the following goals and objectives.

1. Develop a viable strategic plan, operating plan, business plan with a financial timeline and goals.
2. Working with its Artistic Director and in cooperation with Town designees, facilitates and assists in the development of short and long term planning by the organization. Provide effective financial planning for operational and capital improvement budgets.
3. Supervise preparation of annual plans for marketing and development with input from the Artistic Director and appropriate Board Committees.
4. Work on behalf of the Board, to direct coordination of all fundraising, including annual, endowment, capital and other special capital campaigns and events. Actively solicit individual contributions, corporate sponsorships, and grants and assists the Board and Development Staff in their efforts.
5. Prepares annual budget, with input from the Finance Committee and Artistic Director, for submission, discussion and approval by the Board of Directors.

6. Oversees execution of annual marketing and sales plan.
7. With Artistic Director, facilitates recruitment, orientation, training and inspiration of the Board of Directors; establishes and maintains appropriate levels of Board member involvement in the organization.
8. Working with Artistic Director, serves as a major spokesperson to the community, donors, subscribers, and all supporters. Helps establish and maintain strong relationships with donors, subscribers and the community as a whole
9. Directs preparation of monthly financial statements, including analytical summary and recommendations. Manages cash flow, controls and approves expenditures, and is responsible for adherence to budget.
10. Supervises hiring, training, compensation and discipline of all staff in accordance with personnel policies and applicable law. Obtains endorsement of Artistic Director in the recruitment and selection of marketing and development staff; supports Artistic Director and Production Manager in hiring and management of all production and artistic staff.
11. With the Board and Artistic Director, helps establish and maintain a positive sense of purpose and direction for the organization.
12. Oversee the renovation and rehabilitation of the Theater building.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information can be found in the Festival and Arts Programming Study. Go to the home page of the town website [www.townofstratford.com](http://www.townofstratford.com) and click on the link: “ACG Preliminary Findings” under Things to Know.

### **Conditions**

#### **Reservation of Rights**

The Town in its sole and absolute discretion reserves the right to reject any and/or all responses for whatsoever reasons it deems appropriate. Furthermore, the Town in its sole and absolute discretion shall be the sole judge in determining whether to enter into a contractual relationship with any respondent.

#### **Addendums**

All addendums will be posted on the town website [www.townofstratford.com](http://www.townofstratford.com). It is the responsibility of the respondent to check the website for any addendums before submitting their proposal.

#### **Interviews**

The Town may short-list respondents for interview to clarify qualifications and verify its evaluation.

## **Submittals**

Respondents shall submit six (6) copies of their proposal which should include the following:

1. A written proposal fully describing relevant work experience, training and fund raising.
2. List of similar projects completed.
3. Qualifications of the personnel relevant to this project.
4. 4-6 references related to their experience and qualifications.

**Submission Deadline** ☐ 3:00pm on May 15, 2014. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered. (The Town reserves the right to extend submittal deadline for up to 30 days.)

**Submit Proposal To:** ☐ Purchasing Agent, Town of Stratford, 2725 Main St. Stratford, Ct. 06615.

Proposals must be in a sealed package and clearly marked with the RFP number and description on the outside of the package, including all outer packaging (DHL, FedEx, UPS, etc).

**For Additional Information or Clarification, Contact:** ☐ Michael Bonnar, Purchasing Agent, via email at [mbonnar@townofstratford.com](mailto:mbonnar@townofstratford.com)

**Basis for Award of Contract:** ☐ Related Qualifications, Proven Experience, Exhibited Financial Means, Most Competitive Bid

**Award Date** ☐ July 15, 2014