



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
FOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH SERVICES FOR
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
DIRECTOR**

RFP# 2025-044VF

**Response Due Date: October 15, 2025
 1:00 PM ET
 No extensions will be granted**

**Contact for Questions regarding this RFP:
Erin Vest, Special Projects Coordinator
Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
veste@buffalolib.org - (716) 858-7175**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
FOR EXECUTIVE SERVICES FOR
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
DIRECTOR SEARCH**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (BECPL) Board of Trustees (Board) is requesting proposals from interested parties to conduct a nationwide search to assist the Board in filling the position of Director.

BECPL employs approximately 560 full-time and part-time staff. BECPL has a 2025 operating budget of \$34,669,428 and library materials budget of \$3,200,000.

The BECPL System is made up of 23 independent organizations, with a total of 37 locations within the boundaries of Erie County in Western New York, a service area of approximately 1,043 square miles with a service population of 954,236.

The Central Library and eight city branches are located in the City of Buffalo. There are 28 libraries located in suburban and rural areas of Erie County. BECPL also has two mobile libraries, including a Library on Wheels Bookmobile.

Buffalo is located on the international border with Canada and is rich in history and culture. Erie County is home to vibrant and diverse communities, offering a wide range of urban, suburban and rural lifestyles.

Erie County offers a wide array of cultural programs, nationally renowned art museums and theaters, public and private universities and colleges, professional sports teams, stunning architecture and a wealth of year-round activities.

The mission of BECPL is: *Connecting our diverse community with library resources that enrich, enlighten, and entertain.*

BECPL has a long legacy of providing services and programs for families, children, teens, adults and seniors focusing on available information and resources about literacy, community, culture, health and wellbeing to meet the ever-changing needs of Erie County's residents. The 37 libraries reach Erie County's residents by being innovative centers of information, education, culture and entertainment. Today BECPL System has more than 3,236,466 materials available for borrowing by over 400,000 library cardholders including books, eBooks, DVDS, music and more. In 2024, overall circulation totaled 7,256,779.

The Director is employed by and reports to the Board of Trustees, recommends policies to the Board and implements them on the Board's behalf, and is responsible for the overall management and administration of the organization.

For more information on BECPL, please visit the web site at www.Buffalolib.org.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

The Board is seeking professional assistance in locating and recruiting highly qualified candidates through a national search to fill the position of Director. A broad search, which identifies the best executive level candidates from the library profession, is anticipated. The firm selected will report to BECPL's Deputy Director, Chief Operating Officer (Angela Marinucci) as delegated by the Board, be responsible to work with the Board, and will operate under its authority and general direction. Consultant services will be paid for through a contract between BECPL and the consultant with specific terms and services to be agreed upon.

TASKS: The consultant is expected to perform the following tasks:

2.1 Data Gathering and Planning

Meet with the Board to gain an understanding of the organization's needs, climate and culture, job expectations and desired qualifications/characteristics of the new Director. As directed by the Board, interview key stakeholders and synthesize input received. Assist the Board with development of the selection process and project schedule.

2.2 Recruitment Plan and Advertising

Develop a recruiting plan to be approved by the Board that includes identifying prospects from a wide range of sources of executive level candidates and conducting personal outreach recruiting to encourage applicants who can function effectively in the BECPL System culture and environment. The search strategy shall include an array of recruiting strategies in order to develop a pool of qualified candidates. The consultant will conduct personal outreach recruiting to ensure competitive candidates from diverse backgrounds apply.

Develop a Job Announcement and advertisement for review and approval by the Board. Produce and distribute announcements and advertisements locally and nationally to targeted organizations, web sites, and publications as approved by the Board.

2.3 Candidate Identification

Consultant will maintain an open and accessible recruitment process that encourages application. Consultant will respond to all inquiries related to this recruitment, will accept all applications and record each into a database. Throughout the process, consultant will keep applicants informed of their status in the selection process.

The consultant will evaluate all candidates against the position specifications, verify credentials and experience and recommend a list of superior candidates to the Board for review. (Number of candidates to be referred to be determined with Board in Step 2.2) Information provided will include a Candidate Evaluation Profile. The consultant will also provide a complete list of all applicants with brief synopsis of experience at the time the list of superior candidates is submitted to the Board.

2.4 Reference Checking & Background Investigation

Executive Search Firm

Once the Board has made a selection of the candidates to be interviewed, the consultant shall contact individuals qualified to comment in-depth about the candidates and the consultant shall provide a report detailing the collective comments made by references. Once a finalist has been identified, the consultant shall conduct an in-depth background investigation. The Library may conduct its own background investigation of any candidate at any point in the recruitment process, and shall share the results of such investigations with the Consultant.

2.5 Final Selection Assistance

The consultant shall assist the Board in the process of developing questions, interviewing and evaluating final candidates and making the final selection.

2.6 Negotiation of Director Contract

Consultant will serve as an advisor to BECPL's Chief Operating Officer (Angela Marinucci) and Assistant Deputy Director, Human Resources (Judy Fachko) who will negotiate between the Board and the final candidate. Consultant will also communicate with the other finalists as appropriate.

3. PROJECT SCHEDULE AND TERM OF CONTRACT

The project schedule will be established at the first organizational meeting between the Board and consultant. Award of the contract is anticipated to occur on or around November 21, 2025. It is the intent of the Board to hold final interviews no later than May 8, 2026.

4. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Prospective consultants shall provide three copies of a proposal that must include at least the following:

4.1 Qualifications and Experience of Firm and Key Personnel

Describe the credentials and experience of your firm and key personnel assigned to the project, to demonstrate that they possess the professional expertise and resources needed to carry out the project successfully. This should include proven ability to conduct nationwide recruiting, and any prior experience in the public service area in general and the library field in particular. Provide a thorough description of organizations served, those organizations' budgets, number of libraries, size of staff, and funding source.

4.2 Proposals for Completing Scope of Work

Describe how your firm will complete the responsibilities and tasks outlined in the Scope of Work with details on the proposed recruiting plan. Please include the following:

4.2.1 A clear description of how the tasks will be accomplished and the method that will be utilized to complete the Scope of Work.

4.2.2 Estimated costs to complete the Scope of Work, including breakdown of costs per task, or provide details of an alternate method of estimating costs. Identify reimbursable expenses, if any.

- 4.2.3** A timeline for completion of tasks.
- 4.2.4** Presentation of qualifications and resources planned for the project. List the names, detail the credentials of project staff and identify each person's role and level of participation.
- 4.2.5** A description of unique and additional experience.
- 4.2.6** Support that will be required by the consultant from the Board, staff, or other agencies.
- 4.2.7** Three references, including name, address and phone number of each contact person for peer-level searches in the library executive area.

5. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection of consultant will be a three-step process in which only complete submittals will be evaluated. First, the qualifications and proposal for completing the Scope of Work will be evaluated based on these criteria:

- a. Qualification and experience of the firm,
- b. Qualification and experience of key personnel assigned to the project,
- c. Proposed approach that reflects understanding of our needs and the overall quality of the proposal,
- d. A record of timeliness in completion of tasks as confirmed by references, and
- e. Cost appropriateness and values of any additional suggestions, modifications and improvements to the Scope of Work.

Second, the finalist(s) may be interviewed and references will be contacted. In the final step, the firm deemed to best meet the library needs will be selected for contract award. The contract terms are to be negotiated and the resultant contract will be for a fixed fee plus authorized reimbursable expenses.

6. RULES AND CONDITIONS FOR SUBMISSION

The Contractor's proposal and the RFP shall become part of any contract that is negotiated with the successful contractor unless modified in writing by the contract.

6.1 Address of Contact Person

- 6.1.1** The contractor shall direct all questions concerning the RFP and the final proposal through email to Erin Vest at veste@buffalolib.org.
- 6.1.2** Any information provided after distribution of the RFP is for clarification only and not binding on the Library.

6.2 Submission of Proposal

- 6.2.1** Completed proposals must be submitted through email to Erin Vest at veste@buffalolib.org or by mail:

Erin Vest
Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
1 Lafayette Square
Buffalo, NY 14203

- 6.2.2** The proposal must be received by BECPL no later than 1:00 pm on Wednesday, October 15, 2025.
- 6.2.3** If BECPL receives any proposal after 1:00 pm on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, BECPL shall not accept the proposal.
- 6.2.4** BECPL will review all proposals that are received by the deadline stated above. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the contractor's qualifications, proposed price, and any other factors deemed relevant and in the best interest of BECPL. BECPL reserves the right to waive any irregularities in the submission of proposals or in the proposals received, and to reject any or all proposals submitted.
- 6.2.5** The proposal should clearly state the company name, business address, and business telephone. The proposal should clearly state that the contractor has carefully reviewed the RFP, and that the company has the ability and willingness to provide all of the necessary services and materials. It should also clearly state the total length of time during which the products, services, and any related prices presented in the proposal are valid and reliable. It is required that this time period be no less than ninety (90) days from the date the proposals are due. The contractor must clearly state that the proposal submitted presents a true offer of services and products. It must be clearly stated that the proposal is not a result of any direct or indirect coordination or collusion with other companies submitting a proposal in response to this RFP.

6.3 Requests for Clarification

- 6.3.1** Questions and requests for clarification concerning this RFP shall be submitted in writing, delivered by email (veste@buffalolib.org), no later than 1:00 pm on Friday, October 10, 2025. The words "Executive Search" shall appear on the subject line. Inquiries shall state the page and the applicable RFP section or paragraph to which the question(s) pertain. Phone requests for clarification will not be accepted.
- 6.3.2** The contractor shall be responsible for requesting clarification concerning the RFP to allow the contractor to respond specifically, thoroughly, and clearly to every specification, requirement, or questions presented in the RFP. BECPL shall in no way be responsible for any errors or ambiguities in the RFP. A failure by BECPL to respond to any request for clarification shall not be considered by any contractors

that BECPL agrees or disagrees with any statement, which may be contained in the request for clarification.

- 6.3.3** All clarifications to the RFP will be distributed to all contractors who have received a copy of the RFP. The source of an inquiry occasioning a clarification shall not be given.

6.4 Withdrawal or Modification of Proposal

- 6.4.1** A contractor may withdraw or modify its proposal in writing by email at any time prior to the RFP deadline for submission on October 15, 2025.
- 6.4.2** No contractor shall modify or withdraw their proposal for a period of ninety (90) days after the deadlines set in this RFP (i.e., January 13, 2026). The successful contractor shall not modify or withdraw their proposal after having been notified by BECPL that their proposal is being considered for negotiation.
- 6.4.3** Submission of a proposal shall signify the contractor's agreement that the proposal and contents thereof shall be valid for ninety (90) days following submission of the proposal.

6.5 Contractor Contact

- 6.5.1** BECPL may invite one or more contractors to meet with BECPL representatives to clarify the contractor's proposal.

6.6 Contractor Right of Refusal

- 6.6.1** BECPL reserves the right to reject any and all proposals for any reason. Submission of a proposal is recognition by the contractor of this right.
- 6.6.2** BECPL reserves the right to accept other than the lowest priced proposal and to negotiate with any contractor when the best interests of BECPL are served by doing so.

6.7 Contractor's Cost to Develop Proposal

- 6.7.1** Costs for developing proposals in response to the RFP are entirely the obligation of the contractor and shall not be charged to BECPL in any manner.

6.8 News Release

- 6.8.1** Mention of BECPL or its employees in advertising, customer lists, photographs, or articles in the professional literature pertaining to an award resulting from

proposals made in response to this RFP shall not be made by any contractor without prior approval from BECPL administration.

7. CONTRACTUAL

The following provisions apply to this Request for Proposal, Proposer Responses and any resulting contract:

7.1 Subjectivity to NY State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)

This RFP and any responses submitted are subject to potential disclosure. All books and public records of a governmental entity, the contents of which are not otherwise declared by law to be confidential must be open to inspection by any person and may be fully copied pursuant to the New York State Freedom of Information Law (Public Officers Law, Article 6, §84-90). For more information see: <http://www.dos.ny.gov/coog/foil2.html>.

Proposers are responsible for segregating and clearly marking as confidential any “trade secret” or other material the proposer wishes excluded from disclosure under FOIL. Proposer must also submit written documentation demonstrating the material within the proposal marked “confidential” conforms to New York State law. Not conforming to these requirements will cause your proposal to be deemed non-compliant and subject to rejection by BECPL.

The failure to segregate and clearly mark confidential information, trade secrets and/or proprietary information, shall constitute a complete waiver of any and all claims for damages caused by release of the information by BECPL.

Submitted proposals, which are marked “confidential” in their entirety, or those in which a significant portion of the submitted proposal is marked “confidential” are subject to rejection by BECPL without further consideration.

All proposals are confidential until the contract is awarded; at which time, both successful and unsuccessful proposers’ proposals content not complying with the exclusion provisions noted above become public information.

The content of each proposal will be held in strict confidence and no details of any proposal will be divulged to any other proposer prior to proposal openings.

7.2 Utilization of Minority and Women Personnel

If the proposer and/or subcontractor(s) is an Erie County / City of Buffalo Certified Minority Business Enterprise/Women's Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE), proposer should include the certification letter with the proposal. If not, proposer must include a statement of the anticipated utilization of minority professionals as a percentage of the staffing to be utilized to provide proposed services and the anticipated utilization of women professionals as a percentage of the staffing to be utilized to provide proposed services.

7.3 Utilization of Subcontractors

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If the proposer intends to use subcontractor(s) for any portion of the proposed work, the proposer will identify the work to be subcontracted and identify the firm(s) along with a statement of their contact information and qualifications.

7.4 Liability and Insurance Requirements

The vendor must certify that the vendor is an independent contractor and the vendor's firm, its officers, employees, agents or subcontractors shall not be considered to be employees or agents of BECPL. The vendor shall indemnify and hold BECPL harmless from any loss, liability, damage, death or injury to any person or property, from any negligent or wrongful act or omission of the Contractor, its agents, or employees, arising directly or indirectly as a consequence of this contract.

The vendor shall further indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the County of Erie, its officers, employees and agents from and against any and all liability, damage, claims, demands, costs, judgments, fees, attorney's fees or loss arising directly or indirectly out of the performance or failure to perform hereunder by the vendor or third parties under the direction or control of the vendor.

Insurance shall be procured by the successful vendor before commencing work, no later than 14 days after notice of award, and maintained without interruption for the duration of the contract, in the kinds and amounts specified in Exhibit A "Sample Contract and Insurance Requirements." If the insurance is not provided in acceptable form within this period of time, then the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Chief Operating Officer may declare the vendor non-responsive and award a contract to the next highest point-scoring vendor.

7.5 Conflict of Interest

7.5.1.1 No officer or employee of BECPL shall have an interest in any contract with the proposer/vendor, when such officer or employee, has the power or duty to:

- a. negotiate, prepare, authorize or approve the contract or authorize or approve payment thereunder,
- b. audit bills or claims under the contract, or
- c. appoint an officer or employee who has any of the powers or duties set forth above.

7.5.1.2 "Interest" as used herein means a direct or indirect pecuniary or material benefit accruing to an officer or employee of BECPL as the result of a contract with BECPL. An officer or employee of BECPL shall be deemed to have an interest in the contract of:

- a. his or her spouse, minor children and dependents, except a contract of employment with BECPL,
- b. a firm, partnership or association of which such officer or employee is a member or employee,
- c. a corporation of which such officer or employee is an officer, director or employee and

Executive Search Firm

- d. a corporation any stock of which is owned or controlled directly or indirectly by such officer or employee. New York State General Municipal Law §§ 800 - 801.

7.5.2 The provisions of section 7.5.1.1 shall not apply to:

- a. A contract with a person, firm, corporation or association in which an officer or employee of BECPL has an interest which is prohibited solely by reason of employment as an officer or employee thereof, if the remuneration of such employment will not be directly affected as a result of such contract and the duties of such employment do not directly involve the procurement, preparation or performance of any part of such contract;
- b. A contract with a membership corporation or other voluntary non-profit corporation or association;
- c. A contract in which an officer or employee of BECPL has an interest if such contract was entered into prior to the time he or she was elected or appointed as such officer or employee, but this paragraph shall in no event authorize a renewal of any such contract;
- d. A contract with a corporation in which an officer or employee of BECPL has an interest by reason of stockholdings when less than five per centum of the outstanding stock of the corporation is owned or controlled directly or indirectly by such officer or employee;
- e. A contract in which a municipal officer or employee has an interest if the total consideration payable thereunder, when added to the aggregate amount of all consideration payable under the contracts in which such person had an interest during the fiscal year, does not exceed the sum of one hundred dollars;
- f. A contract with a member of a private industry council established in accordance with the federal job training partnership act (29 U.S.C.A. § 1501 et seq.) or any firm, corporation or association in which such member holds an interest, provided the member discloses such interest to the council and the member does not vote on the contract. General Municipal Law § 802.

7.5.3.1 Any officer or employee of BECPL who has, will have, or later acquires an interest in any actual or proposed contract with BECPL of which he or she is an officer or employee, shall publicly disclose the nature and extent of such interest in writing to the governing body thereof as soon as he or she has knowledge of such actual or prospective interest. Such written disclosure shall be made part of and set forth in the official record of the proceedings of BECPL. Once disclosure has been made by an officer or employee with respect to an interest in a contract with a particular person, firm, corporation or association, no further disclosures need be made by such officer or employee with respect to additional contracts with the same party during the remainder of the fiscal year.

7.5.3.2 Notwithstanding the provisions of section 7.5.3.1, disclosure shall not be required in the case of an interest in the contract described in sections 7.5.2.1 d., e., f., above.

7.6 Non-Collusion

- 7.6.1 Each proposal shall also contain the following statement subscribed by the proposer and affirmed by such proposer as true under the penalties of perjury:

By submission of this proposal, each person signing on behalf of any proposer certifies, and in the case of a joint proposal each party thereto certifies as to its own organization, under the penalty of perjury, that to the best of knowledge and belief:

- a. The prices in this proposal have been arrived at independently without collusion, consultation, communication, or agreement, for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices with any other proposer or with any competitor;
- b. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices which have been quoted in this proposal have not been knowingly disclosed and will not knowingly be disclosed by the proposer prior to opening, directly or indirectly, to any other proposer or to any competitor; and
- c. No attempt has been made or will be made by the proposer to induce any other person, partnership, or corporation to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.

Carima El-Behairy
Chair
Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees