



Kalamazoo  
Public Library

Request for Proposals  
Professional Consulting Services For

**New Alma Powell Branch of the Kalamazoo  
Public Library  
Space Needs Study**

Proposals Due:  
April 12, 2024

## INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

The Kalamazoo Public Library invites proposals for professional services from architects, designers, and construction consultants with demonstrated experience, knowledge, and expertise in library planning, design, and architecture for the construction of a new Alma Powell Branch Library. This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks to identify and engage a qualified team to bring innovative, sustainable, and community-focused design and construction solutions for the development of a state-of-the-art library facility that meets the current and future needs of the Kalamazoo community.

Proposals shall be submitted by no later than Friday, April 12, 2024 at 5:00 pm to:

Terry New  
Interim Director  
Kalamazoo Public Library  
315 South Rose St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007  
(269) 220-9721  
[Rfp@kpl.gov](mailto:Rfp@kpl.gov)

### General

1. This RFP and addenda are available on the library's website at [www.kpl.gov](http://www.kpl.gov).
2. Any changes to the RFP or addenda will be posted no later than March 13, 2024.
3. All questions about the solicitation must be in writing and received by March 18, 2024.
4. The library is not liable for any costs incurred by any firm in connection with this RFP. Expenses incurred by the responding firms are the sole responsibility of the firm and may not be charged to the library.
5. All proposals submitted shall be binding for 90 calendar days following due dates.

## Introduction

The Kalamazoo Public Library is embarking on a focused study, dedicated to envisioning the future of the new Alma Powell Branch. This targeted study aims to outline the possibilities for this pivotal library project, ensuring it aligns perfectly with community needs and aspirations. The core objective is to determine the most effective way to serve the community through the development of a new facility specifically tailored for service to the Northside community of Kalamazoo.

This study will stand apart from other space needs assessments being conducted for the library's other buildings. It will concentrate solely on understanding and planning for the unique requirements of the Alma Powell Branch, including identifying the ideal location that best serves the community's interests.

To achieve this, the study will delve into a comprehensive analysis to:

- Evaluate potential sites for the new Alma Powell Branch, considering factors such as accessibility, community impact, and alignment with strategic goals.
- Determine the size and scope of the new facility based on an in-depth understanding of the community's needs, preferences, and anticipated future growth.
- Engage with the community through forums, surveys, and focus groups to gather input that will shape the vision and functionality of the new branch.
- Examine the possibility of a satellite location to enhance service delivery for the extensive North Side community, based on a thorough assessment of per capita service metrics and community demand.

The library seeks to collaborate with a consulting team that will not only demonstrate an insightful understanding of library space planning but also possess the capability to deeply engage with the community to ensure the new Alma Powell Branch embodies the vision and needs of the people it intends to serve. This project represents a significant step forward in the library's mission to adapt and grow with its community, ensuring that the new Alma Powell Branch will be a vibrant, welcoming, and dynamic space for all.

## LIBRARY BACKGROUND

The Kalamazoo Public Library was organized in 1860 and began serving the public in 1872. KPL now serves a population of approximately 116,000 residents through four permanent locations, two temporary locations, and a mobile library. Ensuring comprehensive access and service continuity across the Kalamazoo district, KPL offers its constituents extensive physical and digital resources collections, computers, printers and access to emerging technologies, year-round programming for all age groups and other support services.

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### Alma Powell Branch History



#### An Anonymous Gift

In May of 1968 an anonymous gift of \$10,000 was received by the Kalamazoo Board of Education for the purpose of establishing a library in the Northside neighborhood. At that meeting, the board acknowledged the gift but decided not to accept it immediately. Instead the board asked the Friends of the Library to study the proposed facility and make recommendations for its implementation.

The donor, later revealed to be Mrs. Dorothy Dalton, made certain stipulations about the new library. In addition to its location in a poor neighborhood, she asked that it be staffed by accredited library personnel who would select books for the facility in consultation with leaders and teachers of the Northside community. She also wanted a small stage for rehearsal purposes, since it was her hope that the library would work with such groups as creative writers, drama groups, art, music and dancing groups.

## Library Services

Library services were first offered on the Northside in 1915 at the North West (later Westnedge) Street School. A few years later it was moved to the new Lincoln School. What became of that small library is not clear, but it was no longer operating in March of 1969 when the Board of Education approved the establishment of a small library room at Lincoln School, to be funded by the Friends of the Library and the Public Museum. It would be staffed by volunteers, offer a place to study, and provide a collection on black culture and other books for the people of the Northside. It would be a regular part of the Kalamazoo Public Library system, and was named by the Friends and the Board of Education in memory of Mrs. Alma Powell. Mrs Powell joined the KPL staff in 1946 and worked at Lincoln School and the Eastwood Branch Library until her death in 1967. She was a noted storyteller and enjoyed sharing her rich African heritage and love for books with children.



*Mrs. Alma Powell*

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## Alma Powell Room

The new room held its first open house on October 12, 1969, the 97th anniversary of the library system. The branch was first directed by the distinguished librarian and researcher Mary Mace Spradling, who took a leave from her duties as the head of the young adult department at the main library. Featured services of the new facility included a Saturday story hour for children, a seminar for young adults, and a coffee hour for adults.

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## A New Location

As a new location was being planned for the branch, Mrs. Roberta Cheney was appointed head of the Alma Powell Library in July of 1971. She had been director of the Cass County Library and was well prepared for the work ahead.



*Figure 1 Powell Branch Library, then at 702 N. Burdick Street.*

Mrs. Dalton's vision came to fruition when the new Alma Powell Branch was opened in December 1971 in a remodeled building that had formerly housed the Van Avery Drug Store. It seems appropriate that a building that was the focus of a civil rights action should become the branch's first home of its own. Earlier, residents of the Northside had protested and picketed the drugstore for its refusal to hire employees from the clientele that it served. This eventually led to its closing. After standing vacant for a short time, it was reborn as the Alma Powell Branch.

Mrs. Cheney said of the new building, "The building looks great. It's wide open—with windows on two sides. It is full of bright off white and gold with accents of bright oranges, saffron, deep purple and red. Draw drapes of a marvelous Finnish casement cloth add the right touch of luxury. The building is truly the only bright spot in the whole drab Northside community." Her philosophy was simple. She wanted the library "to be a complete community service. A focal point for the Northside community. I would like to see how I can enhance the learning process of black youngsters, and show them how they can relate themselves to the things in the world. A library can help a child find himself." Her success in achieving her goals resulted in her being named "Michigan Librarian of the Year" in 1972, for her "outstanding contribution to effective and improved library service to a community."



*Figure 2 Powell Branch Library at its former location in Douglass Community Center.*

### **“Books and Basketball?”**

Attendance was not what had been hoped for at that location, so in January of 1985, the branch moved into the new [Douglass Community Association](#) building on West Paterson Street in a more centralized residential location. At the opening, Dr. Benjamin Wilson was quoted by the Kalamazoo Gazette, “A library under the same roof as a gymnasium? Books and basketball? A sneaky way to give kids the message that there’s more to life than a slam dunk ... doing a slam dunk is beautiful, but so is sitting down and reading a book.”

### **1996 Renovation**

After a decade of hard use, the branch was renovated in 1996. The completely re-configured interior now includes youth, adult audiovisual, and technology areas. Five new display cases along the east-west corridor wall feature African-American artifacts. A traditional Kente cloth hanging inspired the richly colored floor, ceiling and wall finishes and built-in furnishings. Descended from generations of weavers, artist Gilbert Bobbo created the narrow strips at his studio in Ghana, where weaving is a noble vocation. Each motif represents a song, legend, or proverb. Michael Hayden’s holographic film was applied to the barrel-vaulted skylight and now dapples the library with color. Any afternoon finds the branch a-buzz with children working on computers, finding books to read, and getting help with homework. Roberta Cheney’s belief that a library can help a child find himself is clearly realized at the Alma Powell Branch.

## **2024 Suspension of Services**

In the fall of 2023, the Douglass Community Association adopted security protocols that required guests to be admitted electronically through locked entrances during open business hours and sign in and out during their visit. As a tenant of the DCA, library patrons were required to adhere to the DCA's security protocols to access library services within the Alma Powell Branch.

While Kalamazoo Public Library respects the DCA's right to determine security protocols for their facilities, requiring library patrons to adhere to the new security protocols to access the library presents a service barrier and infringed on patrons' First Amendment rights and the right to privacy protected by the [Michigan Library Privacy Act](#) (Act 455 of 1982\*).

At the end of business on Saturday, February 3, 2024, Kalamazoo Public Library suspended library services at the Alma Powell Branch

KPL is assessing options for temporary locations to relocate the Alma Powell Branch Library patrons until a permanent location can be built. In the interim, library services to the Northside community continues through outreach, mobile library service, pop-up computer labs and deposit collections throughout the community.



## LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

### **Strengthening Organizational Health**

KPL employees will feel welcomed, supported, and valued while contributing to an environment that prioritizes their safety and security, and their physical, mental, and social well-being. The library will support the professional development and growth of all employees.

#### Goals

Goal 1: Create a culture of greater accountability and encourage system-wide commitment of the library's vision, core values, and priorities.

Goal 2: Strengthen safety and security for oneself, employees, and patrons.

Goal 3: Develop informed and compassionate library employees that reflect the makeup of our diverse community.

### **Advancing Equity and Inclusion: Library Services for All in our Diverse Community**

Community members will have access to library services, programs, and collections that meet and reflect their needs.

#### Goals

Goal 1: Provide equitable access to library materials and services to everyone in our community, free from barriers.

Goal 2: Provide equitable access to library engagement opportunities.

### **Inspiring Literacy, Learning, and Engagement**

Community members will have learning resources and engagement throughout their lives to prepare and support them for school, work, and life.

#### Goals

Goal 1: Provide opportunities for lifelong learning to create success in school, the workplace, and in life.

Goal 2: Provide opportunities and access for community members to be creative through experiential learning.

Goal 3: Provide collections to support lifelong learning and experiential learning.

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## SCOPE OF WORK

The following scope of work is considered to be the minimum level of effort required. The consultant is encouraged to recommend changes to the scope of work that would lead to a more successful project.

### 1. Community Engagement and Needs Assessment

- Facilitate extensive community engagement through public forums, focus groups, and surveys to capture the community's vision, needs, and expectations for the new library. Analyze demographic data, current library usage patterns, and potential future demands to inform the project scope and design.
- Evaluate the size of the area served and determine if and where a second satellite location would make sense to better serve the community. This assessment should consider geographic accessibility, population density, and demographic trends to ensure that any additional location(s) meet or exceed the levels of service provided by other branch locations. This evaluation will help in identifying strategic locations that enhance accessibility and convenience for all community members, thereby maximizing the library's reach and impact.

### 2. Site Selection and Evaluation

- Identify and assess potential sites for the new library, prioritizing accessibility, community impact, environmental sustainability, and potential for future expansion. Perform feasibility studies, including zoning compliance and environmental impact assessments.

### 3. Strategic Planning Integration and Program Development

- Utilize the Library's Strategic Plan to tailor the new branch's development, focusing on enhancing organizational health, advancing equity and inclusion, and inspiring literacy and engagement. Design spaces that are welcoming, secure, and supportive of both staff and community needs, facilitating a culture of accountability, safety, diversity, and lifelong learning.

### 4. Design Development

- Develop conceptual and detailed designs that reflect community input and strategic objectives. Incorporate flexible, innovative spaces that support a wide range of library functions and services, including technology-rich areas, community meeting spaces, and quiet study zones.

### 5. Sustainability and Accessibility Integration

- Emphasize sustainable design practices to minimize environmental impact and operational costs. Ensure the entire facility is accessible, meeting or exceeding ADA standards, to serve all community members equitably.

## **6. Technology and Infrastructure Planning**

- Plan for advanced technological infrastructure that supports digital literacy and access to digital resources. Include robust electrical, HVAC, and plumbing systems that ensure a comfortable, efficient, and future-proofed environment.

## **7. Interior and Exterior Design**

- Propose interior and exterior design elements that create a welcoming, functional, and aesthetically pleasing environment. Consider durable materials and finishes that align with sustainability goals and community identity.

## **8. Budget Estimates**

- Provide a detailed breakdown of all anticipated costs associated with the construction of the new library branch. This includes, but is not limited to, land acquisition, construction materials, labor, architectural design, interior fittings, landscaping, and any contingencies.

## **9. Comprehensive Documentation and Reporting**

- Deliver detailed project documentation, including community engagement findings, design plans, sustainability strategies, and budgetary overviews, in both digital and physical formats. This plan should specify the frequency and methods of communication and include mechanisms for feedback and inquiries.

## **10. Final Presentation and Feedback Integration**

- Present the final project plans to stakeholders, including the library board, staff, and community members, incorporating feedback into the final implementation strategy to ensure the project meets all expectations.

## *PROPOSAL FORMAT AND SELECTION CRITERIA*

Each proposal must contain, in the following order:

1. Letter of transmittal, addressed to Terry New as above. The letter should identify the submitting firm or consultant, as well as the name, title, telephone, fax number and e-mail address of the person authorized to contractually obligate the firm or consultant for this project and confirm if this individual will also serve as the primary point of contact. The named person should sign the letter.
2. Executive summary of proposal, not to exceed 2 pages in length.
3. A document outlining the qualifications of the firm or consultant including the firm or consultants' history, its capabilities and relevant experience. Included should be demonstrated experience with similar library projects and any qualifications such as professional licenses or certifications.
4. A description of the project team, along with resumes for each person. Please describe in appropriate detail the role each person will perform on this project. Project team members should be available for the duration of the project or alternates should be named in the proposal, along with their qualifications.
5. Provide a list of libraries for which your firm has recently provided similar services. This should include contact names, phone numbers, and email addresses for each reference. One of these references should be directly related to the project example that you are submitting as part of this proposal.
6. Provide a detailed project plan which clearly outlines your understanding of the project, your proposed methodology, specific tasks, and an estimated timeline for each task. The plan should include projected deliverables, a schedule with key milestones, and any assumptions or potential obstacles that could affect project timelines. Additionally, please specify any resources or support you anticipate needing from the Kalamazoo Public Library that have not been previously outlined in the scope of work.
7. Exclusions are exceptions-note any parts of the proposal that is beyond the expertise of the consultant or would be better handled by library staff.
8. A cost proposal including the total fee and cost by proposed task. These should include costs for providing planning services, including supplies, and estimate of hours, rate schedule for project staff, estimated reimbursable expenses, number of on-site visits and cost per trip, and other costs associated with the planning process.
9. Any additional documentation or information that the firm or consultant deems necessary to assist the Kalamazoo Public Library in the selection process.
10. Include one example of your firm's most successful similar project, along with the original RFP on which it was based. Supporting documents such as project management plans, timelines, cost reports, and user feedback should also be included, if available, to demonstrate the project's success and the firm's project management capability.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals meeting the RFP requirements will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. **Adherence to RFP Instructions:** Consideration of whether the proposal was delivered on time, complete, and demonstrated a good understanding of the project needs.
2. **Information about the Firm:** Evaluation of the firm's proximity for responsiveness, references from other library projects, and its status as a disadvantaged or minority owned business entity, if applicable.
3. **Number of Similar Projects Completed:** Assessment of the firm's experience and track record in similar projects.
4. **Timeline for Implementation:** Evaluation of the proposed timeline for project implementation, assessing its realism, or the lack of an implementation plan.
5. **Review of Sample Submission:** Review and scoring of a sample submission from the firm that most closely aligns with the RFP, focusing on innovation, feasibility, and proposed level of community engagement.
6. **Overall Cost:** Evaluation of the total cost of the proposal.

## COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Upon release of this RFP, any inquiries or requests regarding this project should be directed to:

Tom Sowell  
Kalamazoo Public Library  
315 South Rose St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007  
(269) 220-9721  
[Rfp@kpl.gov](mailto:Rfp@kpl.gov)

Written questions about this RFP should be submitted by e-mail on or before March 18, 2024.

## SUBMISSION DEADLINES AND TENTATIVE PROJECT SCHEDULE

Library issues RFP	March 11, 2024
Deadline for Written Questions	March 18, 2024
Library Issues Responses to Questions	March 19, 2024
Deadline for Proposal Submission	April 12, 2024
Consultants Interviews	Week of April 22, 2024
Consultant Selection	Week of April 29, 2024
Anticipated Contract Start Date	May 1, 2024
Anticipated Contract End Date	June 15, 2024

Tour of KPL facilities available upon request to:

Tom Sowell  
Head of Facilities Management  
Kalamazoo Public Library  
315 South Rose St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007  
(269) 220-9721  
[TomS@kpl.gov](mailto:TomS@kpl.gov)

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