



Request for Proposals: Development Audit and Fundraising Plan

Summary

Adkins Arboretum is seeking proposals from a Fundraising Consultant (individual or firm) to guide the board of directors and senior management in enhancing its fundraising capacity and developing a comprehensive fundraising plan for the organization.

Adkins Arboretum is one of the few botanical institutions focused on conserving and promoting the flora of the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain. The Arboretum's collection comprises 400 acres of native plant communities in cultivated gardens and successional patterns of meadows, old fields, pine plantations, young hardwood forests, mature bottomland forests, and wetlands.

As a significant natural, educational, and cultural resource, the Arboretum is a model for preserving and restoring native plant communities and habitats and promoting the appreciation and use of native plants.

Our vision is to inspire environmental stewardship, provide respite and healing, and celebrate the world's natural and cultural diversity through the joy and wonder of nature. We are a welcoming gathering place for a broad and diverse audience, providing a venue for education, research, community engagement, and the arts.

We are seeking a consultant to enhance the Arboretum's capacity and success in fundraising and develop a comprehensive, customized fundraising plan.

Scope of Work Statement

Consultant will partner with Adkins Arboretum to strengthen our fundraising capacity through the completion of a comprehensive development audit and the creation of a practical, actionable development plan. The budget maximum for this plan is \$20,000. The scope should be planned accordingly to fall within this budget.

Deliverables

1. A kick-off meeting with the project team to align on scope, priorities, work plan, and deliverables.
2. Development Audit of the Arboretum's fundraising capacity. Identify strengths and weaknesses of existing fundraising efforts and infrastructure to determine areas for improvement and development. Assess external opportunities and threats, as well as the organization's readiness, to inform the fundraising plan and ensure its success.
3. Prospect list that includes potential donors (private sector, governments, foundations, individuals, and others) that work to support the Arboretum's vision. The list will also include upcoming RFPs, relevant application procedures, and deadlines.
4. Strategic multi-year fundraising plan that includes strategies to increase the Arboretum's fundraising revenue from the private sector, government, foundations, individuals, and others that is reflective and in alignment with the organization's mission/vision/values, and capacity.
5. Pitch deck based on the fundraising plan.
6. Ongoing consulting/coaching during the implementation stage.

Submission Requirements

1. All Proposals should be submitted electronically in PDF or Word to: Ginna Tiernan, Executive Director at gtiernan@adkinsarboretum.org.

2. Proposals have a 5-page maximum. For ease of reading, use 1.5 spacing and 12-point font size.

All proposals must include:

- a. A cover letter.
- b. Experience and qualifications of the consultant relevant to this project, and include the resume of the principal resource development professional providing direct service for this project.
- c. A narrative that addresses how the Scope of Work, as outlined above, will be accomplished, including a timeline with benchmarks and the number of hours required to accomplish the plan.
- d. A reporting and communication plan and schedule. (frequency and mode).
- e. Clear demonstration that the consultant has familiarity/ knowledge of Adkins Arboretum.
- f. Clear outline of responsibilities for both Adkins Arboretum and the selected consultant.
- g. Project fees must be clearly defined and all-inclusive. Please note that billing will align with the achievement of set goals and/or milestones.
- h. Three (3) references from clients for whom the consultant has performed similar services.

Proposed Evaluation Criteria

The Selection Committee will review all accepted proposals and will evaluate and score them using the following criteria:

1. Overall match between the RFP requirements and proposal: Understanding of scope, objectives, and completeness and coherence of response (35 points)
2. Qualifications and previous work of the consultant (25 points)
3. Demonstrated ability of consultant to carry out fundraising plan of similar character and size (25 points)
4. Cost effectiveness (15 points)

Schedule

RFP Release: Monday, February 23, 2026

Proposals Due: Monday, March 16, 2026

Consultant Selected: Monday, April 6, 2026

Project Begins: Monday, April 20, 2026

Consultant to present the draft plan to the Board: Tuesday, July 28, 2026

Plan Completion Date: Monday, August 31, 2026

Coaching during the early implementation stage: April - November, 2026

Selection Process

Adkins Arboretum will employ a two-stage process to select a qualified consultant for the stated work.

1. Stage 1: All proposal packages submitted will be reviewed by a selection committee. The Selection Committee anticipates shortlisting up to three (3) consultants based on an evaluation of the written proposals submitted. Shortlisted consultants will then interview with the Selection Committee.

2. Stage 2: Adkins Arboretum will select a consultant based on the selection criteria and interview.

Invoicing

Billing will align with the achievement of set goals and/or milestones.

Terms and Conditions

The successful contractor may be awarded a short-term professional services contract for the services identified in this RFP and the contractor's proposal.

Issuance of this RFP does not commit Adkins Arboretum to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of proposals responding to the RFP.