

THE PUBLIC.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: PUBLIC THEATER ARCHIVES CONSULTANT

PURPOSE

The Public Theater seeks proposals from qualified archivists to serve as consultant on the theater's long-term project to establish an official Public Theater archive encompassing the non-profit theater's 70-year history and ongoing work. The ideal candidate will be an archivist with experience in theater, performing arts, and/or related arts and culture fields to serve as a consultant to evaluate the scope of materials, provide an overall archival assessment, and assist The Public's archive project team by outlining and guiding next steps.

BACKGROUND

The Public Theater continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation's first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public's wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, the Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City's five boroughs, and Joe's Pub. Since premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musicals *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Suffs* by Shaina Taub, and *Hell's Kitchen* by Alicia Keys. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. publictheater.org

As a leading Off-Broadway theater and cultural institution of New York City, The Public hopes to establish an official archive to document the theater's revolutionary past and serve it in the decades to come. The ultimate goal is to have an ongoing archive, staff archivist, launch projects to capture Public history, and make some materials accessible to students, scholars, and the general public, potentially online and in person.

SCOPE OF WORK

Tasks include but may not be limited to the following:

- Review and assess archival materials currently held by The Public, which include but are not limited to the following (additional details available below):
 - Print: photos, Playbills, posters/artwork, press/marketing/artistic-related files, and miscellaneous items
 - Digital: photo and video
 - Tape and DVD: video
 - Production materials: costumes, props, etc
- Meet with key staff members about Public process and history, as well as outside partners and stakeholders regarding Public archival materials.
- Formulate an initial plan of next steps, including resources and processes needed to establish an archive.

- Build an estimated cost and timeline to achieve key steps of establishing an archive (i.e. staffing needs, building a database, digitization, organization, determining copyright and usage agreements, establishing institutional process for records management, etc).
- Make recommendations on necessary equipment, technology and software, space and storage needs, etc.
- Advise development department on archival-specific funding; share suggestions and potentially assist with grant-writing.

DELIVERABLES

Submit written report or presentation to include:

- Assessment of current collection.
- Estimated cost and timeline of key next steps.
- Recommendations for next steps for funding, staffing, and equipment needs.

REQUIREMENTS

- Preferred but not required: Master's degree in Library Science or related area.
- Work experience in theater, performing arts, or related arts and culture fields.
- Candidate would ideally have experience in starting a new cultural archive and migrating materials to digital formats, as well as maintaining and managing an archive.
- Experience with 3D objects and textiles is strongly preferred.
- Must be located in New York City or New York metropolitan area, and able to work on-site at The Public Theater (425 Lafayette Street), as well as travel to off-site storage locations in Queens.
- Must be available to work part-time for up to 3 months with the understanding that the timeline may shift or extend as the project moves forward.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A submission must include the following:

- Resume
- Example of past work
- References
- Preferred fee and payment structure
- Overview of availability for July-December 2024

Please submit materials or any questions to Jana Zschoche, Senior Public Relations Manager, at jzschoche@publictheater.org.

The Public has approximately \$7,000-8,000 budgeted for consultant payment, pending approved fee and final timeline.

Proposals from populations underrepresented in the theater field are strongly encouraged to respond. All qualified proposals will receive consideration for this engagement without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, familial status, sexual orientation, national origin, ability, age, or veteran status of the respondent.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

The existing press archives include:

- A storage space with approximately 70 drawers primarily containing print materials
- Additional office storage covering approximately 110 productions' Playbills
- DVDs and CDs with video and photos
- Several hundred VHS and beta tapes, some of which have been digitized
- Approximately 12 TB of digital photo and video files

Additional Public archival materials include:

- Materials from the artistic and marketing departments and artistic programs such as Joe's Pub
- Four off-site warehouses containing costumes, props, memorabilia, and administrative files, to be evaluated for archive inclusion

Note: The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts also holds a collection of The Public's archives from approximately 1960-1990.

Additional information may be shared upon request. Please share any questions with Jana Zschoche at jzschoche@publictheater.org.