



Request for Proposals: Comprehensive/Capital Campaign for Canal Basin Park

Canalway is seeking proposals from qualified and experienced individuals or firms to create a Comprehensive/Capital Campaign to support the expansion of Canal Basin Park.

About Canal Basin Park

Canal Basin Park is a property of the City of Cleveland and is the historic site where the 1832 Ohio & Erie Canal met the Cuyahoga River and the Great Lakes. Canalway, the City of Cleveland, and other community partners are working to implement a park redesign that will celebrate the compelling history of the site and its position as the northern terminus of the Towpath Trail. Canalway is the main fundraising and programming partner for Canal Basin Park.

Canal Basin Park is a keystone of Cleveland's revitalizing urban riverfront with unmatched river access, a powerful origin-story setting, and the region's most significant convergence of movement—trail, water, downtown, and neighborhoods. Through immersive riverfront experiences, open green spaces, and year-round programming, the park will become a dynamic destination that strengthens community connections and inspires a renewed sense of identity for residents, visitors, and adventurers at the region's northern gateway.

The schematic designs received unanimous conceptual approval by the City Planning Commission in January of 2025. Currently, design teams are working on the design and construction documentation for the first three phases which will determine the immediate fundraising needs.

Scope of Work – Comprehensive/Capital Campaign Consultant

Canalway requests proposals for the initial planning of the campaign to assess the funding landscape while advising the organization on how to strategically leverage pledged funds.

Current funding sources are from government, private, and grant funds. The consultant would work closely with the Executive Director and Community Engagement Specialist to develop the plan to supplement existing funds and guide the strategy to seek additional public sources of funding. Ultimately, a successful campaign would lead to an \$8M investment. It's expected that the engagement would begin March 2026 and take between 2-5 months to develop.

Scope of Services:

The initial phases of this campaign will:

- Identify public and private sources of funding
- Support the staff in the development of a case for support
- Develop a funding timeline for grants and private fundraising sources
- Create leveraging strategies to maximize and the expenditure of existing funding
- Develop engagement opportunities and events which may include online, partnered, and other events to showcase this work and increase visibility among the philanthropic community.

Consultants who have experience with campaigns that support public spaces and public / private partnerships; a proven track record of securing major gifts and understanding of public grants are encouraged.

Budget

This engagement is supported by a \$30,000 grant from The Cleveland Foundation.

Application Requirements

Interested parties should submit a written letter of interest and confirmation of the Scope of work, including associated costs and contingencies. Supporting documents should not exceed more ten (10) pages and include:

- The firm's qualifications and approach to the project, an understanding of your expertise, and examples of similar/aligned work.
- Team Experience & Qualifications – Provide biographies or resumes of key team members who will provide services, highlighting relevant experience.
- Portfolio of Work – Provide examples of relevant work, with a particular focus on funding for public spaces.

Submittal:

Responses will be reviewed beginning February 13, 2026 and remain open until a compatible proposal is identified. Email the full packet in a single PDF to Mera Cardenas, Executive Director at mera@canalwaypartners.com. Title the email "Canal Basin – Comprehensive Campaign - <firm name>"

About Canalway Partners

Canalway Partners is a 40 year-old 501(c)3 non-profit organization that serves as a catalyst for projects and programs within the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area in Cuyahoga County. We connect people to place for the prosperity of all through community programming, preservation advocacy and placemaking support.