

# SPENCER MUSEUM of ART

## Accessibility Consultant Request for Proposals

With support from a Museums Empowered grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services and additional funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas seeks to engage an accessibility consultant, firm, or agency to perform a comprehensive accessibility audit of the Museum with the goal of advancing disability inclusion across Spencer Museum practices and operations. This will include audit of physical and digital accessibility of Spencer Museum spaces and forms of engagement, as well as the preparation of a report with recommended priorities for ongoing and future practices. This assessment should consider disability as broadly as possible. The audit and recommendations will guide the upcoming gallery renovation and reinstallation project and the ongoing development of resources, relationships, and practices to advance disability inclusion. This audit is part of a larger effort at the Spencer Museum to advance equity, accessibility, and inclusion in all areas. The Spencer seeks to exceed ADA guidelines and levels of compliance.

Areas to be evaluated include:

- 1) galleries, study and learning centers, lobbies, other public spaces, and employee areas;
- 2) parking and pathways into the building;
- 3) exhibitions, interpretation, communications, and programming;
- 4) digital spaces and resources, including websites and virtual programming to meet or exceed compliance with WCAG 2.1 Level AA;
- 5) website, social media, and digital applications;
- 6) internal accessibility planning practices.

The scope of work will require in-person and/or virtual visits to the Spencer Museum facility as well as a report on each aspect of the areas evaluated. The dates for the visit, if possible, will be decided upon jointly by the Spencer and the contracted consultant. The consultant hired through this request for proposals will be compensated in part with federal grant funds and must comply with federal spending requirements. The Spencer Museum encourages responses from disability-owned business enterprises, minority- and women-owned businesses, veteran-owned business enterprises, and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender-owned enterprises. If you/your firm's ownership represents one or more of the above, please note it in your proposal.

**Responses Due:** May 3, 2021

**Questions and Proposals to:** Susan Earle, [earle@ku.edu](mailto:earle@ku.edu), or 785-864-0144

**Budget:** \$15,000

**Key Dates:** Report due August 30, 2021. Open to revision of timeline if needed.

**About the Spencer Museum of Art:**

Located on the campus of the University of Kansas (KU), the Spencer Museum of Art maintains a historical and contemporary collection of 45,000+ objects in all mediums and from cultures across six continents. With free admission for all to events, programs, and exhibitions, the Spencer draws visitors from a wide geographic region including metropolitan Kansas City as well as rural communities. The Spencer Museum serves as a dynamic classroom for KU students from diverse disciplines, K–12 students from Kansas and Missouri, and lifelong learners.

**History and State of Accessibility:**

Over the past five years, the Spencer Museum has introduced several accessibility enhancements, including audio descriptions of selected works of art in the collection, Braille and touch-based experiences, audio looping, open and closed captions for in-gallery and digital videos, and communication access real-time translation (CART) for selected programs. The Museum recognizes that proactive disability inclusion strategies will result in more employees and visitors with disabilities who will engage with the Museum and that accessibility enhancements benefits all people while building empathy for the learning styles and life experiences of others. The Museum wishes to expand its disability inclusion practices, make all practices fully integrated, and make them more apparent to a wider range of visitors.

**Audience and Visitors:**

The Museum serves as an informal classroom for University of Kansas students and integrates its diverse collection into the curriculum through customized viewing experiences in its study center, installations co-curated with faculty and students, co-curricular programming, and more. In 2019, the Museum directly engaged 1 out of every 3 KU students, including 98% of incoming freshmen. Furthermore, school teachers from 29 districts across Kansas and Missouri integrated the Museum’s collection into their teaching that year, and more than 2,600 K–12 students visited the galleries as part of school tours. In addition to university and K–12 students, the Museum is a source of education, socialization, and stimulation for lifelong learners. Adults who value free programs, engaging conversations with staff and other visitors, and volunteer opportunities represent a large segment of the Museum’s audience.

**Project Objectives:**

The accessibility audit will inform all aspects of Museum activities and spaces (physical and virtual), as well as disability inclusion strategies across institutional plans and practices, methods of ongoing evaluation, and a gallery renovation and collection reinstallation project.

The evaluation should include interfacing with Museum staff and communities. Ideally, this would also include discussions with the KU Director of ADA Resource Center for Equity and Accessibility, the ADA Campus Architect, and the Central IT Web Accessibility Coordinator.

### **Description of Services and Expected Outputs:**

- Evaluate the Museum's current accessibility accommodations, supports, and services.
- Conduct community evaluation, both currently engaged and those not engaged, to receive direct feedback on accessibility accommodations, supports, and services already utilized and where improvements can be made.
- Provide a checklist of accessibility considerations for event/program planning.
- Evaluate integration of disability inclusion efforts into: project development; public engagement; social media and digital platforms; marketing and promotion; and other institutional policies and practices.
- Advise renovation and reinstallation teams on priorities for design and interpretation.
- Author a report detailing findings from audit, including comparison with peer institutions, a list of exemplary models and leading practices, and actionable recommendations for greater disability inclusion at the Museum.

### **Respondent Requirements**

Applicants are encouraged to review the Spencer Museum's main website (<https://spencerart.ku.edu/>), strategic plan (<https://indd.adobe.com/view/70683120-97ce-45bc-a9f9-58c2e303f201>), and interpretive plan (<https://indd.adobe.com/view/Oba37acf-9467-46d1-bf72-a3b7af3374ea>) in advance of submitting a proposal.

- **Background Information**

A cover letter or executive summary with the name, contact information, brief history, and description of the agency or individual applying. Include resumes or bios of those who will be providing services. The University of Kansas, Spencer Museum of Art is an equal opportunity employer.

- **Your Experience**

Describe your experience or the experience of your firm and its consultants in providing similar services to those requested here. Please give details on what kinds of accessibility audits you have conducted, and outline your experience in the three areas of: (1) physical accessibility audit, (2) digital accessibility audit, and (3) cultural/intellectual/learning accessibility audit. If your greatest expertise is in one particular area, please note that. Please include at least two relevant examples and describe demonstrated outcomes as a result of the work performed for clients.

- **Additional Experience**

Describe any experience you might have had with any of the following types of organizations:

- Art museums, or museums in general
- Universities or colleges
- Not-for-profit institutions

- **Approach and Timeline**

Describe the approach you/your firm uses for accessibility audits and for consulting with organizations on disability inclusion, a proposed timeline, and estimated number of billable hours. If you anticipate being unable to visit the Museum in person, please describe how you would conduct the entirety of the audit remotely. Please include a breakdown of your desired fee for each of the services requested.

- **References**

Provide names and contact information for three previous clients.

- **Conflicts of Interest**

State any known relationships that would or could create a conflict of interest with the Spencer Museum of Art or the University of Kansas if you were awarded a contract.

**Proposal Submission and Project Timeline:**

Please submit your proposal as a single PDF with your name / your firm's name included in the file name. Proposals must be submitted by email to: Susan Earle, Curator of European and American Art, Spencer Museum of Art, at: [earle@ku.edu](mailto:earle@ku.edu) on or before **May 3, 2021**.

Submission Deadline: **May 3, 2021**

Selection of Consultant: No later than **May 31, 2021**

Final deliverables: No later than **August 30, 2021**

Thank you for your interest in responding to this RFP for the Spencer Museum of Art's accessibility audit. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.