

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

FOR

DESIGN SERVICES

FOR

**SELECTED LANDSCAPE FEATURES
OF THE LEARNING CAMPUS,
EDUCATION CENTER, AND GARDEN**

AT THE

CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

**1000 LAKE COOK ROAD
GLENCOE, ILLINOIS 60022**

**WWW.CHICAGOBOTANIC.ORG
HTTP://STRATEGICPLAN.CHICAGOBOTANIC.ORG**

**WILLIAM W. BROWN
VICE PRESIDENT OF FACILITIES AND PLANNING**

SECTION I: DESCRIPTION OF GARDEN PROGRAMS

A. INTRODUCTION

The Chicago Botanic Garden is seeking qualified firms to produce design services as described in this RFQ to plan a new garden on its Learning Campus.

B. BACKGROUND

The Chicago Botanic Garden is a 385-acre living museum known for its extensive, diverse plant collection, exquisite horticultural displays, critical plant conservation research, and in-depth educational programs. Attracting a million visitors a year, the Garden is an ideal setting for teaching and learning about plants and the complex environmental factors – climate, water, human activity, invasive species – that support or undermine healthy natural ecosystems. Creating a new Learning Campus will allow the Garden to increase dramatically both the number and kind of students it serves; significantly expand its capacity to develop innovative, grant-funded initiatives; and cement the Garden’s reputation as the finest teaching garden in the world.

The Learning Campus is a three-acre portion of the Garden immediately west of the main entry road comprising multiple built and natural features. Over the course of its phased construction, now in process, the Learning Campus will emerge as a major new Garden destination for general visitors and students of all ages. When completed, it will constitute the most comprehensive and sustainably designed environmental education campus at any public garden in the world. At a time when science education has never been more important, the Learning Campus will establish the Chicago Botanic Garden as the finest teaching and learning garden in the world and help develop the next generation of nature lovers and plant scientists.

History of the Learning Campus

In 2006, the Garden opened the current Children’s Education Center, a U-shaped modular structure (trailers), containing three classrooms, restrooms, an outdoor tented deck, and office space. This building serves as the hub of activity for school field trips, summer camps, Scout programs, teacher professional development, and other classes. About 25,000 students and 1,100 teachers from Chicago Public Schools, schools from greater Cook County, and the



surrounding area use the Center each year. An additional 86,000 young people participate in recreational and informal educational programs that are part of events and drop-in visitor programs, here and in other locations around the Garden. The programs have outgrown the functional and physical capacities of the temporary building.

The new Learning Campus will allow the Chicago Botanic Garden to double the number of students it serves locally, and to dramatically expand the physical and programmatic infrastructure supporting these services, which are nationally recognized for

excellence. The Learning Campus is honored to pursue these goals in partnership with one of the country’s leading plant conservation science and academic programs, offered jointly by the

Chicago Botanic Garden and Northwestern University. Audiences served through the Learning Campus will range from very young learners to adult continuing education students; teachers and educators from a variety of school and instructional settings; youth, after-school and family groups; and general visitors who want to learn about plants and nature.

The components of the Learning Campus are as follows:

- A new **Entry Drive and Plaza**. Completed fall 2011. This road provides direct drop-off access for the more than 600 field trip buses that come to the Garden every year, and for the thousands of Camp CBG parents who drop off and pick up their children each summer. The pathway along the west side of the road leads families and groups to and from the Campus, the Garden, and the parking lots. The Entry Drive provides accessible parking for the increased number of special-needs children who are being served by education programs.
- The **Grunsfeld Children's Growing Garden**. Opened June 2012. Children in student and family groups will use the 10,000-square-foot garden for active, hands-on planting of both ornamental and food crop plants. The solar panels on the potting shed, the wind turbine immediately adjacent, and a water catchment and retention system that recycles rainfall will help teach the ways in which sun, wind, rain and animal interactions help plants to grow. Features like a red horse-chestnut tree, an open-weave fence covered with climbing plants, and a living wall of sedum will provide a unique welcome to children and adults.
- The **Kleinman Family Cove**. Opening August 2012. The Cove's outdoor shoreline amphitheater, garden, and wading areas will allow children and adults to study, in a very unique way, the aquatic plants and animals that inhabit our wetland ecosystems and to learn about the critical role that fresh water plays in our lives.
- The nearly one-acre **Great Lawn and Pollinator Garden**, at the heart of the Learning Campus. Opening to be determined by funding. This inspiring garden will encourage play, exploration, and learning. It will attract a large segment of the Garden's ever-increasing visitorship, provide an exceptional recreational and educational platform, and help channel visitors to other Learning Campus destinations. The Pollinator Garden will be a magnet for children and family groups, attracting and helping them understand the critical role that pollinators play in sustaining life, season after season and year after year. This feature of the Learning Campus is further described below.
- The 25,000-square-foot **Education Center**, a state-of-the-art facility for programs and staff that will expand learning opportunities for both children and adults. Opening to be determined by funding. Designed as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) platinum project by Booth Hansen in collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) of Boulder, Colorado, the Education Center will serve as a beautiful, light-filled laboratory for program participants to learn about plants, natural ecosystem biodiversity, and sustainability. The building provides eight classrooms, two of which are designed for early childhood use, and all open to outdoor garden spaces. A kitchen classroom will expand education and fee-based programs, and an atrium will welcome visitors and provide multi-purpose activity space. A covered deck will provide protected program space, and two 800-square-foot greenhouses will allow for year-round teaching

using live materials. One of the two greenhouses, the Creature Classroom, is further described in the following section.

Learning Campus Impact

The completed Learning Campus will more than double current school field trip participation, directly tap the market for high quality, year-round early childhood classes, dramatically grow the summer camp program, offer a whole new palette of wellness and culinary training options for adult learners, and attract many new Garden visitors and members. The response to the Campus, both during development and on completion, is expected to drive a significant increase in earned revenue for education and a new set of opportunities for the Garden as a whole.

Learning Campus activities and programs will be closely linked to the Garden's 25 display gardens and four natural areas – woodlands, wetlands, lakes, and prairie – which serve as a 385-acre outdoor classroom for education programs. Classes and programs will also be supported by the research laboratories located within the Garden's Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Plant Conservation Science Center, a 38,000-square-foot laboratory, exhibit, and meeting space on the Garden's south end, and by teaching space in the Regenstein Center, the Garden's main exhibit, rental event, and meeting space.

C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **The Lawn and Garden:** This is the main “green space” zone for the Learning Campus and encompasses about one acre of land (see attached plans). Turf, diverse herbaceous and sensory plants, paths, benches, and a water feature are envisioned for this zone. The “lawn” (current placeholder name) must serve multiple functions for the Learning Campus: as the visual and functional “front yard” for the campus; as a welcoming, safe, informal activity zone for school student and family groups who are en route to/from programs in the new Education Center or in the Children's Growing Garden; as a place that engages children in movement and discovery (fulfilling program features that will be lost when the existing “outdoor classroom” on the Garden's east road is removed); as a site for guided playful learning activities; and as a venue that can be used flexibly for family-focused Garden events and possibly rentals. The Lawn should reflect the Garden's educational mission, which is to afford children (and their adult companions) a tactile, authentic, and enjoyable experience of the outdoors – without resorting to playground-like structures – that still addresses a child's needs to move and explore and engages their natural curiosity. These might include places to hide, varied terrain and elevation, and space for imaginative, “loose parts” play.

The Lawn should strive to be a true “part of the whole” Learning Campus that is planned or already built. Since parents will be accompanying their children, the Garden should take that opportunity to educate the parents as well as the children on issues such as garden maintenance, water conservation, and other important issues. The Garden will also explain why the particular plants in the area were chosen. The parents will take the concepts the Garden presents home with them. Finally, this garden should have the same high aesthetic standards as all other gardens on the Campus, and should appeal to audiences of all ages, and encourage repeat visits.

2. **Outdoor Classrooms and Building Landscape:** These four garden spaces are associated with the main building of the campus, the 25,000-square-foot Education Center (see attached plan). The outdoor classroom gardens are adjacent to eight indoor classrooms so

that children can walk out of a classroom and into a garden that supports the plant and environmental science based curriculum. These gardens will extend learning to the outdoors by providing spaces and features for activities such as comparing plant parts, observing interactions between plants and animals, and conducting messy, hands-on outdoor garden experiments with water and soil. One of the four gardens will serve the two early childhood classrooms and should be designed especially for the youngest learners who attend programs, while also appealing to adults.

The surrounding building landscape should connect the four outdoor classrooms with each other and the larger campus, forming a cohesive, pleasing, and playful design. It should also reflect a similar or very complementary landscape aesthetic as reflected throughout the larger Garden and its various buildings (i.e., Administration Building, Regenstein Center, and Plant Conservation Science Center). Since the building will be heavily used throughout the cold season, plantings and landscape ideas that create year-round interest and habitat for wildlife are especially encouraged.

SECTION II: SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. GENERAL DESIGN

1. The designer will be responsible for supervision and performance of all design activities necessary to produce documents for construction of the projects. The designer will ensure that the final design will be feasible within the established schedule and budget.
2. The designer will be responsible for ensuring that the design is compatible with the operating requirements of the Chicago Botanic Garden.
3. The designer will be responsible for producing a high quality design that is sensitive to the Garden's tradition, its present role, and its desired future.
4. Garden designs will be subject to review by a variety of committees. The designer will have a key role at review meetings, and will prepare graphics and other materials required for these presentations.
5. The designer will submit a final schedule for design phase activities. The designer will be responsible for reviewing the schedule at least monthly; for maintaining the schedule throughout the design process; and for completing the design, including necessary public meetings and design approvals, within the approved schedule.

SECTION III: PROJECT COST

The total budget for this project is \$3,000,000. This includes: all hard cost of construction; all soft costs for design, engineering and construction; contingency; and general conditions.

SECTION IV: PROJECT SCHEDULE

1. Issue RFQ – June 15, 2012
2. Responses to RFQ due – July 18, 2012

3. Establish RFP short list – August 2012
4. Issue RFP – September 2012

SECTION V: SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposal, as a minimum, must be organized as follows and include the following items:

A. COVER LETTER

The cover letter, signed by an authorized representative of the firm, must contain: a summary of key points of the submittal and a description of your firm's organizational structure (e.g., number of employees, firm financial information, etc.).

B. SUMMARY

This section should include a statement of understanding and approach to the work.

C. QUALIFICATIONS

1. Firm's Qualifications: Provide profiles on all firm's members, including experience on projects of similar size and scope. Describe firm's experience with not-for-profit organizations. Include a description and images of any relevant experience.
2. Firm's Key Personnel: Submit resumes for key personnel committed to this project; these personnel can be both managerial and technical. Describe previous experience and projects.

D. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION

1. Submit five paper copies and one electronic copy of the proposal to William Brown. Proposal shall be submitted by July 18, 2012.
2. We expect to evaluate these responses promptly upon receipt of them, and subsequently issue a detailed Request for Proposal to candidates selected from respondents to this RFQ. We appreciate your thoughts and responses to the RFQ and encourage you to contact William Brown with any questions you might have.

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