

DETROIT WAYNE COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY



Request for Proposals for: Port of Detroit Tall Ship Event Consulting Services

Port Detroit Tall Ship Event



DETROIT WAYNE COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY RFP

Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Port Detroit Tall Ship Event

1. Introduction

The Detroit Wayne County Port Authority is seeking proposals from qualified event planning firms or individuals to help organize and execute our tall ship event on August 7-10, 2025. The Port Detroit/Tall Ships America event aims to draw tourists and ship enthusiasts to our waterfront to see and tour the ships and to promote our maritime heritage.

2. Background

Tall Ships America organization (“TSA”) was founded in 1973 with a mission to encourage character-building through sail training, promote sail training to the public, and support education under sail. TSA organizes tall ship festivals that bring vintage and replica sailing ships to host communities. The events draw tourists and ship enthusiasts to see the ships and pay to tour the ships and take rides. The events generate corporate sponsorships and revenues from dinner and sunset cruises. TSA estimates that their events have generated \$1.9 billion in economic benefit to local host communities.

The Detroit Wayne County Port Authority (“Port Authority”) is serving as the host port on August 7-10, 2025. Previously Detroit and the Port Authority hosted the Great Lakes Tall Ship challenge, with the most significant event in 2001, in conjunction with the Detroit Tri-Centennial. The joint celebration brought millions to the riverfront.

The Port Authority has once again been invited to host a Tall Ships event on August 7-10, 2025. Based on feedback from TSA and experience from previous events, we expect between 70,000-100,000 attendee tickets will be sold.

TSA has tremendous experience and will guide us to ensure a good experience for the ships, onboard crew, host port, sponsors, and the participating public – and of course a financially successful event.

3. Event Details

- **Event Name:** Port Detroit Tall Ship Festival
- **Event Date(s):** August 7-10, 2025
- **Event Location:** The Detroit Wayne County Port Authority Public Dock and waterfront.
- **Expected Attendance:** 70,000-100,000
- **Type of Event:** Tall Ship Festival

4. Scope of Work

The selected vendor(s) will be responsible for the following tasks:

Scope 1: Event Planning Manager for the Port Authority

- Plan and coordinate the event in coordination with Tall Ships America and the Port Authority
- Schedule meetings with sponsors, government agencies and community partners
- Event programming, planning, and logistics coordination
- Develop the budget, ticket and revenue strategy and financial projections
- Risk management, insurance and legal agreement structure
- Sponsorship strategy and implementation, budget, and revenue management *
- Marketing and promotion strategies
- Media relations and community outreach
- Manage contractor relations
- Post-event evaluation and reporting

** Includes fundraising strategy and implementation, including sponsorships, advertising, tickets etc. and the expectation that revenues will surpass the \$450k budget.*

Scope 2: Event Operations Manager/Consultant

- Event logistical support-daily site planning and communications
- Ticket sales and special events
- Ship Management
- Vendor/Hospitality management (catering, entertainment, etc.)
- Guest Experiences
- Media Relations
- Coordination with tall ship operators and crew-harbormaster
- Security
- On-site management during the event

* Scope 1 and 2 can be combined by vendors.

5. Proposal Requirements

Interested parties should submit a proposal that includes:

- Company/individual background and experience in event planning
- Relevant past events (especially maritime-related)
- Proposed approach to organizing the tall ship event
- Budget breakdown (including estimated costs for each component)
- Timeline for planning and execution
- References from previous clients

6. Budget

The Detroit Wayne County Port Authority has estimated a budget of \$450,000 for the event. Proposals should provide preliminary feedback on the feasibility of this estimate, along with a proposed budget breakdown by category, and any potential additional costs.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Experience and qualifications
- Creativity and approach to the event
- Budget feasibility
- References and past performance
- Ability to meet timelines

8. Submission Guidelines

Proposals should be submitted electronically by September 4, 2024, to:
Mark Schrupp, Executive Director – mschrupp@portdetroit.com

9. Notice of Intent to Respond & Request for Updates

Persons or entities who wish to receive direct updates may register by sending an email to jjamian@portdetroit.com and include your name, address, email and cellular phone number.

10. Timeline

- RFP Release Date: August 19, 2024
- Questions due: August 26, 2024
- Responses posted: August 28, 2024
- Proposal Submission Deadline: September 4, 2024
- Interviews (if necessary): September 5-6, 2024
- Board approval of selected Vendor(s): September 20, 2024
- Event Date: August 7-10, 2025

11. Questions and Clarifications

Any questions regarding this RFP should be directed to John Jamian, Director of Operations by August 26, 2024. jjamian@portdetroit.com. Responses will be returned to all registered persons and entities and posted on the Port Authority website at: www.portdetroit.com/bids-and-proposals by Wednesday, August 28, 2024.

12. Conclusion

We look forward to receiving your proposal and working together to create a memorable Port Detroit Tall Ship event that celebrates our maritime culture and engages our community.