



**Harlem African Burial Ground RFEI**  
**Project # 6352**  
**Questions & Answers**  
**November 21, 2019**

In connection with the **Request for Expressions of Interest** relating to the **Harlem African Burial Ground** released by NYCEDC on **October 21, 2019**, the questions from potential Respondents and answers provided by NYCEDC are below.

**1. Q: The RFEI contains a response requirement for an M/WBE Participation Proposal. How does a non-profit responding to the RFEI incorporate the stated M/WBE goals?**

**A:** Both the City and NYCEDC encourage participation in City and NYCEDC procurement by minority-owned business enterprises and women-owned business enterprises (collectively referred to as “M/WBEs”). Though not-for-profit entities are not eligible for M/WBE certification, a non-profit Respondent can include M/WBE’s in their Participation Proposal that would provide services for the daily and/or long-term operations of the Memorial and/or Cultural Education Center. Examples of services include security, marketing and design firms, and janitorial services. If a Respondent is interested in additional resources to identify M/WBE firms, they can contact NYCEDC via [edc.nyc/opportunity-mwdb](http://edc.nyc/opportunity-mwdb) for a list of certified vendors.

**2. Q: How will a non-profit’s M/WBE Participation Proposal be evaluated?**

**A:** A non-profit Respondent’s proposal will not be evaluated solely on their M/WBE proposal; however, the City and NYCEDC encourage Respondents to explore strategies to incorporate potential M/WBE opportunities through their Participation Proposal. An outline of criteria that NYCEDC will use to assess the Respondent’s the M/WBE Participation Proposal can be found in Part 2, Section 5 of the RFEI (see pages 14-15).

**3. Q: The E126<sup>th</sup> Street Redevelopment Project, which will include the HABG Memorial and Cultural Education Center, allows for up to 30,000 square feet of community facility space. It is estimated that the Cultural Education Center will occupy approximately 15,000 square feet. Has there been any indication of what the remaining community facility square footage would be?**

**A:** The 30,000 square feet of community facility space includes the approximately 15,000 square foot Cultural Education Center. The remaining square footage of community facility space will be programmed when the Developer for the E126th Street Redevelopment Project is procured. NYCEDC is planning to publicly, competitively procure the Developer for the E126th Street Redevelopment Project through a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) following the conditional designation of a Respondent to this RFEI. More information on the development process can be found in Part 1, Section 2 of the RFEI (see pages 7-9).

**4. Q: The conditional designation of an Operator will occur in advance of the procurement of a Developer for the E126th Street Redevelopment Project. Will the Operator participate in Developer selection?**

**A:** While NYCEDC expects to provide informational briefings to the conditionally designated Operator during the E126th Street Redevelopment Project Developer procurement, the conditionally designated Operator will not participate in selection of the Developer. The evaluation of responses and selection of the Developer will be performed by NYCEDC.

**5. Q: The RFEI response requirements includes descriptions of space requirements, proposed uses, and programming. In terms of the space objectives and requirements outlined in the RFEI, should designers be involved in an organization's response?**

**A:** NYCEDC seeks to clearly understand the proposed operations of the Cultural Education Center, but a detailed design is not expected at this stage. Respondents should endeavor to best describe their proposed space needs and programming through narrative descriptions and high-level, diagrammatic visuals, if necessary. While programmatic uses and space needs should be considered in responses, this RFEI is not evaluating design proposals for the Outdoor Memorial or Cultural Education Center and Respondents are not encouraged to retain design professionals in order to respond.

**6. Q: Will the design team for the Memorial and Cultural Education Center be selected by the Developer or the Operator?**

**A:** . The design team for the E126th Street Redevelopment Project, including the Cultural Education Center, will be provided by the selected Developer as a part of the RFP process. It is expected that there will be a separate, public process to identify the designer and design of the outdoor memorial component of the Redevelopment Project. The conditionally designated Operator will work in partnership with the Developer throughout the design and construction process for the E126th Street Redevelopment Project to ensure a cohesive overall site plan. Upon designation of the Developer for the E126th Street Redevelopment Project, the conditionally designated Operator(s) would negotiate with and enter into an agreement(s) with such Developer to govern the design, construction, operations, and other matters pertaining to the Outdoor Memorial and Cultural Education Center. See Section 2 of the RFEI (pages 7-9) for more on the design and development process.

**7. Q: In the RFEI, the Operator's role is described as producing with programmatic concepts for the operation of the Cultural Education Center. Will Respondents be expected to hire consultants for this conceptualization?**

**A:** We seek to limit costs to the Respondents associated with the RFEI. Respondents should create a programming proposal for the Memorial and Cultural Education Center that is in alignment with the vision of the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force and other community stakeholders. The programming should consider the local community and be responsive to its needs and desires. Programs for young children, after school programs for elementary, middle and high school students, adult programming, and senior programming, should all be considered. Respondents are encouraged to create partnerships with local community-based organizations for programming, and any potential partnerships should be included in the proposals. For more on the community and stakeholder vision for the Cultural Education Center, see Section 3 of the RFEI.

**8. Q: The RFP for the E126th Street Redevelopment Project is going to be released after the conditional designation of an Operator. When will the RFP be released?**

**A:** Though there is currently no date determined for the release of the RFP, it is expected to be released in 2020. More details on the RFP can be found in Part 1, Section 2, pages 7-9.

**9. Q: The Developer Operating Cost Contribution is expected to fund up to One Million Dollars for eligible operating costs. Is there a budget for the cultural center?**

**A:** Attached to the RFEI is a memo extracted from the Lord Cultural Resources report that lists contemplated eligible operating costs. These expense categories include salaries and wages, contractors, administration, exhibitions, public and education programming, marketing costs, and more. Should the eligible operating costs not exceed the maximum Developer Operating Cost Contribution, the Developer will only be obligated to pay the actual eligible operating costs. The Developer will not be responsible for any costs in excess of the Developer Operating Cost Contribution in any year. It is expected that Respondents will submit proposals that reflect financial sustainable operations. See Exhibits B and C in the RFEI for more details.

**10. Q: What will happen if there are no proposals submitted that satisfactorily meet the evaluation criteria?**

**A:** In accordance with Part 5, RFEI Terms and Conditions, NYCEDC reserves the right to amend, modify or withdraw the RFEI, among other actions. During review of the submitted responses, NYCEDC may request additional information or materials from Respondents to supplement their original submissions. The Respondents may be asked to attend one or more in-person interviews regarding their respective proposals.

**11. Q: What has the excavation and preservation process been to-date?**

**A:** In 2011, the MTA hired a consultant to evaluate the site's archeological history. The review of historical documents, termed as a "Phase 1A" study, revealed that the site had a long and varied history, having once been used as a burial ground from the 17th to 19th centuries.

In 2015, NYCEDC hired a team of archaeologists to perform a preliminary archeological dig, termed as "Phase 1B." Archaeologists did not find any evidence of human remains within the area of the historic Harlem African Burial Ground, but evidence of bone fragments was discovered elsewhere on the eastern portion of the site. Skeletal remains are present in the northeastern corner of the lot, discovered in an archeological test pit that includes area both within and outside of the Harlem African Burial Ground boundary. No intact burials were found, as the Harlem African Burial Ground site was severely disturbed and displaced in the mid-19th century after a succession of sales, construction, and subsurface disruptions. Elmendorf Reformed Church, the descendant church of the Harlem African Burial Ground, and the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force were involved in the removal of bone fragments from the ground, and a ceremony was held to honor those once buried on the site. For more information on the archeological work, visit [edc.nyc/habg](http://edc.nyc/habg) and [habgtaskforce.org](http://habgtaskforce.org).