

**Request for Proposals**  
**Visual Anthropology of the Statue of Liberty within the African American**  
**Communities**  
**November 8, 2021**

The National Park Service (NPS), through a cooperative agreement with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc., (ASALH), is seeking the services of a Principal Investigator (PI) or Principal Investigators who can develop a research on and an assessment of the use of the Statue of Liberty as a visual icon within the Black American community.

This project is set as a visual anthropological study that relies on image, history, symbol, and ethnography as the principal elements of research data. An earlier ethnographic study, *The Black Statue of Liberty Rumor*, documented the links of the Statue to the African American story and recommended that future research be done on a comprehensive study of the symbolic use of the Statue in the continuous American dialogue on race relations, from its dedication to the present. This project documents the historic and ongoing relationship of the Statue of Liberty to the African American community through its deployment as a multi-vocal symbol across different class and regional variations within the African American community. Ultimately, the results of this research provide a documentary resource to be used in future park programs and research for this topic.

The contract is administered by ASALH and the work prepared for and completed in coordination with the National Park Service. All work accomplished by this research project will be credited to ASALH but becomes the property of the National Park Service and will be made publicly available.

**Interested parties should submit a proposal in response to this RFP to ASALH no later than 5:00 pm EST on November 22, 2021. Electronic copies may be directed to ASALH at [nps@asalh.org](mailto:nps@asalh.org) with the subject line “Statue of Liberty RFP.”**

**Project Overview**

The Statue of Liberty, designated a national monument in 1924, included in the NPS in 1933 and a World Heritage site in 1984, would never have been conceived if its principal French and US advocates had not been active abolitionists. For these men, French-American friendship meant shared ideas of political and civil liberty expressed in transnational republicanism which was explicitly anti-slavery.

The Statue of Liberty was intended to commemorate the abolition of slavery and the subsequent enfranchisement of African Americans. The black press championed the French-American project; African Americans contributed to the pedestal fund. They participated in the public celebrations for the Statue’s unveiling in New York City and conducted their own celebrations.

In the 1920’s, the Statue appeared in logos for African American businesses and mastheads for newspapers to highlight threats against liberty and inspire fights against racism. The Statue also

appeared in both the black & white press in campaigns for federal anti-lynching legislation & against discrimination. During the two World Wars, African American cartoons and editorials invoked the Statue to symbolize the links between racism at home and abroad.

In the 1960's-70's, civil rights activists used the Statue to protest discriminatory policies and acts of civil disobedience. More recently, a strong counter-narrative for the Statue appeared in the form of a rumor that the model for the Statue was a black woman. Racial justice for African Americans has been a recurrent theme ever since the Statue's dedication in 1886.

### **Scope of Project**

This project will generate, relative to the African American communities of the United States, at least the following products:

- a. A report of the documentary history of the use of the imagery of the Statue of Liberty within these communities and how and where the imagery is used in the contemporary frame,
- b. A list of communities past and present who have used the imagery of the Statue of Liberty in their commercial, political, community develop, etc. ...work,
- c. A visual catalog of images used in publication and at specific sites of the Statue of Liberty and its associated imagery (torch, crown, image) historically and in the contemporary era, and
- d. A series of recommendations on further engagement on this topic for the park interpretive, cultural resource, and partnership teams to continue using this information to engage African American visitors going forward.

ASALH and the National Park Service understand that elements of these research products may fall beyond the scope of traditional reporting means, e.g. paper based report, and are open to having RFP respondents included these means of knowledge transfer in their proposal.

### **Required Principal Investigator Qualifications**

The minimum professional qualifications in history are a graduate degree in history or closely-related field plus one of the following:

1. At least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, teaching, interpretation, or other demonstrable professional activity with an academic institution, historic organization or agency, museum, or other professional institution, or
2. Substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of history.
3. Past Experience – to include at least 3 years similar, successfully completed projects within the last 5 years.

## **Additional Qualifications**

Knowledge, skills, and ability in the following:

- Organize data and analyze and interpret its authenticity and relative significance;
- Gather historical data from sources such as archives, court records, diaries, news files, and photographs, as well as collect data sources such as books, pamphlets, and periodicals;
- Conduct historical research as a basis for the identification, conservation, and reconstruction of historic places and materials;
- Conduct historical research and publish or present findings and theories;
- Organize information for publication and for means of dissemination;
- Collect detailed information on individuals for use in the preparation of biographies;

## **Statement of Work**

The dates given below will change based on the beginning date of the Principal Investigator(s).

Work Phase I: Project Development -October 2021 through April 2022.

October 2021-December 2021-Develop bibliography, examine previous research, develop theoretical perspective to inform data gathering and interviews

January 2022- March 2022- Develop interview schedules, submit for permitting and Internal Review Board Human Subjects clearance with institutional partners. Prepare and locate sites for where interviews and public conversations will take place.

April 2022- Discuss with park and planning team summer interview and data collection program and ensure that all permissions are in place.

Work Phase II: Fieldwork Deployment-May 2022 through November 2022.

May 2022-September 2022- Collect field data and interview informants onsite or remotely as necessary. Collect and review rough data with NPS

October 2022: Process raw data and develop basic arguments of approach.

November 2022: Present raw data to NPS and discuss final report structure.

Work Phase III: Editing and Project Completion December 2022-September 2023

December 2022-March 2023: Rough Draft and potential continuation of data gathering, if necessary, in early spring.

April 2023- May 2023: Prepare any archival materials, transcripts, recordings, images for project archive with NPS. Continue editing report adding additional data as necessary.

June 2023-July 2023: Prepare and send draft copies out for review to peerreviewers.

August 2023-September 2023: Final presentation to NPS and project closeout.

### **Proposal Submissions**

For evaluation purposes, proposals should provide sufficient information as to assist ASALH in determining the most qualified Principal Investigator for the project. Interested parties should submit a written proposal that includes the following:

- Name of the individual(s) that would be working on the project and their proposed area(s) of responsibility.
- A curriculum vitae.
- A minimum of at least 3 similar, successfully completed projects within the last 5 years.
- Information on projects of a similar nature and of significant work completed by the Principal Investigator candidate in the past five (5) years. Include specific dates and types of services provided, and highlight success in meeting work schedules, project budgets, and product deadlines.
- A list of references (at least three (3), but not more than five (5)) that may be contacted. The Principal Investigator candidate must return three (3) reference questionnaires from projects of similar scope within the last five (5) years.
- A short narrative that responds to the scope of work as described in this RFP, which demonstrates the Principal Investigator candidate's proposed approach to the project and capability to accomplish the desired goals.
- Resumes of key personnel (Not to exceed two (2) pages on each resume). This factor will be used to evaluate documented evidence of the candidate's ability to provide key personnel who meet all contract qualifications requirements. Proposed key personnel must meet all minimum requirements specified in the RFP for the duties/positions they are proposed to perform. Historian specializing in African American history, particularly of Civil War and Civil Rights history, strongly preferred.
- A proposed project Schedule A
- A proposed budget.

**All proposals must be received no later than 5:00 pm EST on November 22, 2021.** They should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straight forward, concise description of the Principal Investigator candidate's qualifications and capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. Proposals may be submitted via email in electronic format (MS Word or PDF format) to Ms. Kay Phillips, ASALH Project Manager, at [nps@asalh.org](mailto:nps@asalh.org). ASALH will confirm receipt of submissions. However, if there are any issues (e.g., with the attachments working correctly), the Principal Investigator candidate is responsible for resolving these issues with an alternative submission method acceptable to ASALH and NPS.

### **Selection Criteria**

Submittals will be evaluated and ranked based on the following factors, presented in no particular order:

- Qualifications of Principal Investigator candidate.
- The extent to which the proposal addresses the project's purpose and scope of work.
- Experience in conducting historical research for historical biographies, publications, and disseminating research using several forms of distribution.
- Knowledge of use and means of primary resources, searching through digital and hard copy archives, and basic historical interpretation.
- Demonstrated capability of meeting projected deadlines and successfully completing contracts of this type.
- Past performance and references.
- Proposed project schedule.

### **Available Funding**

The stipend for the Principal Investigator(s) of this project is \$30,000 each. Funding is available to pay for two assistant investigators. Additionally, funding is set aside to pay for limited travel for the PI with associated expenses.

### **Terms and Conditions**

A. ASALH reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, and to waive minor irregularities in any proposal.

- B. ASALH reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted, and to request additional information from any Principal Investigator candidate.
- C. ASALH and NPS shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by Principal Investigator candidates in preparing, submitting or presenting its response to this RFP.
- D. All completed nominations and executive summaries must fully comply with Section 508 accessibility standards ([https://www.section 508.gov/content/build/create-accessible-documents](https://www.section508.gov/content/build/create-accessible-documents)) for electronic documents.
- E. Any and all rights to work produced through his project will be vested in the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, including any copyrights.
- F. The selected Principal Investigator must also comply with all applicable provisions of [OMB Circular A-110 A-110 REVISED 11/19/93 As Further Amended 9/30/99](https://www.omb.eop.goa.gov/circulars/a110/). ([https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/circulars\\_a110/](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/circulars_a110/))

### **Questions**

Respondents are invited to submit written questions requesting clarifications or explanations of the information contained in this RFP. **Please direct all proposal or contract-related questions to Ms. Kay Phillips, ASALH Project Manager, at [nps@asalh.org](mailto:nps@asalh.org).**