



# Request for Proposals

Exhibit Writer/Researcher Services

## **About the Maritime Museum of BC**

The Maritime Museum of BC opened in 1955 as a naval museum located on Signal Hill just outside the gates of the HMC Dockyard in Esquimalt. By 1965, the Museum had outgrown the original location and found a new home in the former Supreme Court building in Bastion Square. In 2014, the Museum got news from the Government of British Columbia that the provincially owned historic courthouse needed major repairs that required the building to be empty. The Museum relocated to a new public storefront location at 634 Humboldt St.

In August 2021, the Museum moved again to our current 744 Douglas St. location, next to the Victoria Conference Centre. We have a larger exhibit space and gift shop, including staff offices and a public research space. Most of our collections are now stored off-site but are still accessible through our research request program.

The Maritime Museum of BC remains focused on finding a larger, permanent home to feature new exhibits and engage the community in new ongoing programming.

**MISSION:** Engage communities in witnessing and preserving maritime heritages.

**VISION:** Maritime experiences are boldly embraced, shared and lived from a cultural centre on the waterfront.

## **VALUES**

- **Inclusion:** We embrace diversity, equity and accessibility in all we do. We are welcoming.
- **Respect:** We are compassionate, empathetic and humble. Our results are propelled by collaboration and teamwork.
- **Integrity:** We are open, honest and transparent. Our work is anchored by being responsible, accountable, authentic, and socially and environmentally responsible.



- Innovation: We are curious, dynamic and adventurous. Our work is fueled by passion, action and flexibility.
- Salty: We are everything maritime. Our work is meaningful, impactful and relevant.

### **About the BC Black History Awareness Society**

The British Columbia Black History Awareness Society (BCBHAS) celebrates the achievements of Black people in British Columbia by creating an awareness of the history of Blacks in B.C., stimulating interest in the contributions of persons of African ancestry to B.C. and Canada today, and celebrating historical and contemporary achievements in the arts, education, government, sports, science etc. The non-profit Society was formed in February 1994. Since March 2019 the Society is a charity registered with the Canada Revenue Agency.

The Society's purpose is:

- To advance education by researching, documenting and disseminating information to the general public about the past, present and future contributions and achievements of Black people to British Columbia to increase understanding and awareness, promote diversity and overcome stereotypes; and
- To benefit the community by advancing knowledge, preservation, and displaying of items of historical significance concerning Black British Columbians; and
- To advance education by organizing and implementing conferences, workshops, presentations and cultural information programs to bring together diverse people within the public at large who have an interest in promoting, educating and learning about British Columbia and Canadian Black history and people; and
- To advance education by presenting programs to encourage youth and children to develop an interest in the achievements of Black people in British Columbia and Canada as part of developing an interest in their community and the world; and
- To benefit the community through promoting racial diversity by offering education, assistance and opportunities for Black people in British Columbia who face unique social and economic barriers to incorporate into the multicultural society of Canada.

### **Background**



The Maritime Museum of BC (MMBC) and the BC Black History Awareness Society (BCBHAS) are partnering to present an exhibit on the history of black immigration to BC, starting with the story of the steamship *Commodore*, the first vessel to bring Black immigrants to BC. The exhibit will also explore Black immigration in BC more broadly and how this history has an impact on our province today.

### **Project Brief**

The MMBC and BCBHAS are seeking the services of a qualified exhibit Writer/Researcher to assist with the development of textual content for the *Commodore* exhibit. The exhibit is scheduled to open on 7 November 2025.

Photos, graphics, and other display content will be the responsibility of others on the team, but the Writer/Researcher is expected to help identify possible images and objects they may come across in their research. It is also expected that the Writer/Researcher will be an engaged participant in some of the planning phases as well.

The exhibit will be open to the public at the MMBC from 7 November 2025 to 26 April 2026. The exhibit space is just under 2,000 sq/ft. The exact quantity of text will be determined jointly by the Writer/Researcher and the MMBC exhibit staff with review by the BCBHAS staff. The MMBC does travel most of its exhibits after the exhibit closes in their space, so it is possible that this exhibit will also be featured in other museums in BC.

Preference will be given to individuals or firms demonstrating cultural awareness or experience related to Black History.

This contract is expected to take an estimated 100 hours to complete and will be paid a flat rate of \$5,000 (\$50/hour) for the project. Any additional hours must be approved in advance of being incurred.

### **Submission Requirements**

- Description of experience in writing/research work, particularly as it pertains to museum exhibits
- Three references, including contact information
- A web link to a portfolio of relevant writing projects you have completed

Submissions are to be sent to Heather Feeney, Collections and Exhibits Manager, Maritime Museum of BC, at [hfeeney@mmbc.bc.ca](mailto:hfeeney@mmbc.bc.ca).



Application deadline: 8 November 2024

**Scope of Work**

- Participation in community focus group discussions in the early stages of the exhibit production
- Participation in planning and content development workshops
- Identify main theme and key messages of the exhibit
- Review target audiences and desired audiences, and use this to inform the exhibit headings and narrative structures
- Review/develop editorial style guidelines
- Identify content voice
- Identify and develop a preferred learning style for exhibit copy
- Review content hierarchy and write theme/sub-theme texts and photo/object captions for each interpretive panel and display case (estimated maximum word count: 8,000)
- Written text to be approved by MMBC and BCBHAS
- Update and make corrections to word files to reflect proof edits to texts requested by MMBC and BCBHAS (up to a maximum of three iterations)
- Provide all text files to the MMBC as word documents

**Timeline** (As it applies to this contract)

Please note that this timeline is subject to change but provides a general overview of what works needs to be completed when.

Date	Activity
Late Nov/early Dec 2024	Hold two, 2-hour community engagement sessions/focus group discussions, one in person (held on an evening) and one virtual (held on a weekend). The selected writer/research and graphic designer will be present as well.
Dec 2024 – 15 Jan 2025	Conduct early research and storyboarding and establish strong direction for the exhibit. This will be done in collaboration with the writer/researcher and graphic designer.
15 Jan – 15 Mar 2025	Focused research is conducted by the writer/researcher  <i>*Note: During this time the BCBHAS will have very limited availability while they work on Black History Month events.</i>



The  
**MARITIME MUSEUM**  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

15 Mar - Apr 2025	Research is reviewed in detail and a storyboard is prepared. This work is done in collaboration with the writer/researcher and graphic designer.
May - Aug 2025	<p>Writing takes place, led by the writer/researcher.</p> <p>Storyboarding and exhibit layout are completed in collaboration between writer/researcher and MMBC and BCBHAS.</p> <p>Images are selected and sourced.</p> <p>Objects are selected and sourced.</p>
1 Sept 2025	All exhibit text and images are submitted to the graphic designer.
7 Nov 2025	Exhibit opens to the public during the day. A launch event is held this evening.
26 Apr 2026	Exhibit closes.

### Qualifications

- A personal connection to and understanding of Black history and related social issues
- A post-secondary education related to education or communications fields, or an equivalent combination of education and experience
- Experience in writing and researching for museum exhibitions – excellent written communication, script writing, copywriting, and proofing skills
- Experience managing multiple content contributors and specialists
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills
- Experience working for or providing service to a museum, cultural institution, or similar entity

### Images of Space

The  
**MARITIME MUSEUM**  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

