

Connecticut Science Center
250 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR A CATERING/EVENT PARTNER**

Date Issued: March 22, 2019

Proposal Due Date: May 10, 2019

Invitation to Bid on a Special Business Partnership Opportunity

The Connecticut Science Center is pleased to announce that it has a very special opportunity for the right professional catering firm who is interested in distinguishing themselves as the exclusive catering partner for all external events held onsite at this iconic, high profile venue in the Capital city. The industry giants and leading businesses in Connecticut actively seek to hold their events at the Connecticut Science Center. This is a particularly exciting time as the Connecticut Science Center not only is serving as a key, strategic educational partner in the rapidly growing high tech and advanced manufacturing revolution that is taking place here in Hartford, but those same businesses are looking to present, promote and celebrate the work they are doing. The Connecticut Science Center is well positioned to serve as their event venue of choice for the right catering partner who is willing to invite them in.

Overview of the Connecticut Science Center (CSC)

The Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, is a non-profit educational institution dedicated to enhancing informal science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England attracting 300,000 visitors annually.

With more than 165 hands-on exhibits, a state-of-the-art 3D digital theater, four educational labs, plus daily programs and events, the Connecticut Science Center offers endless exploration for children, teens, and adults. From physics to forensics, geology to astronomy, visitors have the sciences at their fingertips.

The Science Center offers exciting tools to help educators and parents bring textbooks to life. Creating unforgettable experiences with science motivates students and visitors of all ages to enthusiastically embrace science at school, at home, and in their communities.

With an attraction of this magnitude, exhibits rivaling the most unique in the world, programs with the potential to become national models, partnerships with a range of educational organizations, and involvement from global business leaders and benefactors, the Science Center is Connecticut's premier destination for informal science learning, and is well on its way to becoming the state's foremost Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) resource.

Overview of CSC as an Event Venue

CSC also makes its space available generally before and after operational hours to individuals, organizations and private parties for rental to host private catered events, conferences, large and small meetings, receptions, product launches, weddings, showers, bar/bat mitzvahs and other celebratory occasions.

Attachment A provides a summary of the venues/spaces available for rent, their capacity, availability, and the current rental pricing. Income from venue rentals is an important revenue stream for CSC to support and fulfill its educational mission.

Attachment B provides a summary of the averages (including high & low ranges) associated with food & beverage sales over the last 10 years as reported by our current catering partner.

Attachment C summarizes the inventory owned by CSC available for use for event rentals

CSC is Seeking an Exclusive Catering Partner for External Clients

The Connecticut Science Center is seeking a new catering partner that will best serve its catering and event rental needs. We are seeking a full-service partner who can serve as the exclusive catering agent for all external clients looking to hold their events at CSC.

The ideal catering partner will:

- Pro-actively market and sell CSC as a premiere event destination to generate new business and retain recurring clients on an ongoing basis.
- Have the ability to create a small team of event planners/managers who will become completely familiar with CSC operations, facilities, available venues, rental pricing, protocols, logistics, Culture and expectations. While there should be at least one person from the Caterer designated as the main point person for the CSC venue, this individual should have adequate back up to cover absences. Additionally, the ideal caterer should also have access to abundant F&B staff (including bartenders and cashiers) to execute large events on site.
- Respond to and manage all incoming inquiries including site tours, event planning, pricing, etc...
- Convert booked events to contract, plan and execute all logistics including F&B related event staffing, rental coordination, set up and strike after each catered event.
- Manage and maintain the on-site kitchen at CSC sustaining an "A" rating with city Health officials.
- Manage all finances and financial distributions associated with each contracted event.
- Work closely with the CSC liaison staff in Operations to successfully coordinate and execute every event on site. Keep our Development team informed of corporate partners and potential partners who are having events on site.

Catering for Internal (CSC Hosted) Events

For internal events, CSC will retain the flexibility to source food & beverage service providers that best suits its budgetary needs for each event. These types of events may include staff meetings and appreciation events, coffee/breakfast/lunch service for small meetings, and boxed lunches for Professional Development classes. Ideally, the exclusive catering partner for external events will also be able to provide F&B service for these internal events at the right price point and, as such, will be given right of first refusal. However, CSC retains the right to use F&B service from any service provider they choose, based on budgetary and other needs.

REQUIRED SUBMISSIONS FOR CATERING RFP

Questions to be Answered by Caterer and Submitted as Part of their Proposal

1. Why would your catering firm want to take on this business? What experience does your firm have with operating in non-profit, specifically museum, environments?
2. How would you structure the team designated as the CSC venue team? What positions would be on that team and which roles would handle sales, inquires, planning and execution? How would you provide back up for them? What labor pool do you have access to in order to service very large events (500-2,000 guests)?
3. CSC will retain 100% of event rental fees. What would you propose as an additional financial incentive/structure to CSC on top of that? Would you recommend a commission on F&B sales or some other type of fee structure? Please describe.
4. Describe what specific steps you would commit to in order to aggressively promote and sell CSC as an event venue? What event markets in the Hartford market do you see having the most potential and how would you go after those potential clients? What support, if any, would you expect from CSC marketing team?
5. What is your assessment of the Hartford market for events? What trends are you challenged by in this market? What trends excite you where you see real growth and potential? How might CSC leverage those trends?
6. Provide sample menus and price points for a variety of different scenarios:
 - Cocktail reception
 - Sit down dinner
 - Continental breakfast
 - Staff lunch
 - Hot breakfast buffet
 - Bar and food concession service for public events ranging in attendance from 400 to 1,800 (our Science Straight Up and Liquid Lounge type events.)
7. Describe your current portfolio of venues your firm manages. How would CSC compliment your current portfolio of venues? How would you ensure it would not compete with them?
8. How would you propose the handling of a liquor license? Would you recommend that it be held exclusively by the catering partner for the site, or would you recommend working off of your catering license on an event by event basis? Should CSC decide to contract with another caterer for an internal event that involves alcohol, what flexibility would you have in allowing that other food & beverage provider to utilize their catering liquor license for that event?
9. What else would you like to tell us about yourself, your firm, your staff and why you would be the ideal catering partner for the Connecticut Science Center?

Mandatory Minimum Requirements – Information to be Submitted as Part of RFP

Interested and qualified Vendors that can demonstrate their ability to successfully provide catering and event management services requested under this RFP are invited to submit proposal(s), provided they meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The Vendor or its key personnel must have 5 years' experience in the business of catering and/or event management – describe how you meet or exceed this qualification.
2. The Vendor must hold a catering liquor license to serve alcohol (including hard liquor) that can be used at the Science Center.
3. The Vendor must have the ability to market and sell the Science Center venue to external customers. Please describe how you meet or exceed this qualification
4. Provide at least 3 references for similar projects, including name of establishment, dates of service, contact name and telephone number.
5. Describe the experience and qualifications of key personnel. Include detailed resumes.
6. Please submit the Company's official registered name and the year it was established.
7. Please identify the address of the corporate office location(s)
8. Please submit an organization chart of those individuals that would be involved in the contract.
9. Please answer whether or not your company has ever been debarred by the Federal or any State Governments? If yes, has it been lifted and if so, when?
10. Please answer if your company has ever had contracts terminated for breach of failure to perform within the past five years? If yes, please describe the circumstances.

Term of Contract

Ideally, the proposed contract will be for a period of two (2) to five (5) years from the date of the award with the potential for extensions to be negotiated with the Vendor of the winning submittal(s). Anticipated start of services will be July 2019.

DUE DATES

A confirmation of intent to respond to this RFP is requested by April 5, 2019. An email sent to Claudia Davis at CDavis@CTScienceCenter.org is sufficient.

All completed proposals are due by May 10th, 2019 by 5:00 PM EST. Any proposal received at the designated location after the required time and date specified for receipt shall be considered late and non-responsive. Any late proposals will not be evaluated for award.

ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1.	RFP Distributed to Vendors & Posted on CSC Website	Date: March 22, 2019
2.	Written Confirmation from Vendors with Bid Intention	Date: April 5, 2019
3.	On Site Tour and Bidder Q&A	Date: April 10, 2019
4.	Proposal Due Date	Date: May 10, 2019 5:00 PM
5.	Interviews with Final Candidates	Date: May 23-May 31, 2019
5.	Anticipated selection & notification of Vendor	Date: June 7, 2019
6.	Anticipated Contract Start Date	Date: July 1, 2019

PRE-BID MEETING

A pre-bid meeting, which will include a question and answer period, will be held on Wednesday, April 10, 2019 at 2:00 PM EST. This meeting will include a tour of the Science Center, its available event venues and its kitchen facilities. To keep the number on the tour to a manageable group, only two representatives from each company will be permitted on the tour. Please RSVP for the tour by emailing Claudia Davis at CDavis@CTScienceCenter.org. Please indicate who will be coming from your firm, their position and what firm you are representing.

COMPLETE PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

1. Proponents are asked to submit 5 copies of a signed and dated proposal by May 10, 2019.
2. Proposals and all attachments will be submitted via email to CDavis@CTScienceCenter.org or delivered or mailed to: Claudia Davis, Connecticut Science Center, 250 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103
3. Proponents are solely responsible for the delivery of their proposal in the manner and time prescribed.
4. Connecticut Science Center reserves the right to:
 - a. Reject any or all offers and discontinue this RFP process without obligation or liability to any potential Vendor,
 - b. Accept other than the lowest priced offer,
 - c. Award a contract on the basis of initial offer received, without discussions or requests for best and final offers, and
 - d. Award to more than one Vendor. Acceptance of the Vendor's proposal does not constitute a binding contract.

VENDOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS RFP

Vendors may submit written questions regarding this RFP via email to Claudia Davis at CDavis@CTScienceCenter.org. All questions received will be answered and shared with all those who have identified as intending to bid. No phone calls please.