



Request for Proposals

Planning New Interactive Learning Lab Contents and Components for Gibbs Farm
January 26, 2026

Project Description

Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) desires the services of a qualified exhibit designer and planner to develop a cohesive exhibit that explores the agricultural history of the Gibbs family and farming in the immediate Rose Township community between 1870 and 1941. The exhibit will be installed in parts of two buildings National Historic Register structures. 600-800 square feet of space in the lower half of the White Barn will be used for both guided and self-guided tours; as well as re-developing the Farm Lab exhibit of 300-400 square feet in the Farmhouse for guided tour experiences.

The exhibit will draw from many linear feet of archival material from the RCHS archives and collection, which includes photos, documents, and letters. RCHS Collections and Gibbs Farm staff are well versed in archive content and will work closely with the designer, especially in early phases of the project.

Exhibit design should encompass the following standards to ensure it advances the RCHS mission and enhances existing visitor experience:

- Content to be based in part to fulfill MN State Social Studies Standards.
- Content to fit in with existing no-screen/low tech, immersive, and hands-on experiences.
- Content appropriate and educational for both field trip audience and general all-ages visitors.
- Final design that takes historic nature of spaces into account. (White Barn building is not temperature controlled. The historic farmhouse has limited heating, but no other temperature control.)

Organizational Background

RCHS is a private, non-profit organization. Its mission is *Preserving Our Past, Informing Our Present, and Inspiring Our Future*. Organized in 1949, RCHS's work preserves the history of Ramsey County in its collection of 12,256 artifacts and 4.8 million pieces of archival material. In

addition, RCHS operates educational programs across the county, but primarily at Gibbs Farm that serves more than 18,000 students and thousands of educators from all across Minnesota. In addition, RCHS is recognized for its outstanding quarterly history magazine, *Ramsey County History*, and its role in providing programming county-wide.

Scope

Designer will lead the planning of this proposed exhibit with input from RCHS staff primarily using archival materials housed by RCHS.

- The initial phase of the project will be meetings with staff and visits to Gibbs Farm and the RCHS Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Research Center.
- After meetings and site visits, the designer will prepare a Research and Discovery Plan outline, which provides expected needs for:
 - Access to RCHS digital or physical materials.
 - Staff participation or input in research process.
 - Additional research sources (visits to other archives, licenses for photos in outside collections).
 - Preliminary annotated bibliography.
- Assembly of research materials into organized research files that could support future research and/or evolutions or expansions of these exhibits.
- Develop Conceptual Design, and present or submit for staff feedback.
- Schematic Design.
- Develop Preliminary Design, and present or submit for staff, board, and stakeholder feedback
- Work with staff to create list of repairs/upgrades needed before installation can take place (lighting, accessibility, electrical, wall or floor repair).
- Final Design Package ready for next production steps.

Deliverables

1. Research and Discovery Plan outline.
2. Assembly of research materials into organized research files that could support future research and/or evolutions or expansions of these exhibits.
3. Conceptual Design Package.
4. Preliminary Design Package.
5. Final Design Package (to include Final Text and Image Selection, Final Graphic, Final Design of Interactive Elements, Final Design of Three-Dimensional Elements, List of Potential Upgrades or Repairs).

Budget

This project is funded by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and total project payment will not exceed \$27,000. The selected exhibit design contractor will be paid for successful completion and submission of aforementioned deliverables. This sum will include all aspects of project completion, including, but not limited to: transportation, copies, printing, interviews, transcriptions, blueprints, payments to subcontractors or consultants, etc.

Timeline

January-February 2026: Exhibition Designer works with RCHS staff to understand the organization's vision and the project's scope, themes, and goals.

March-April 2026: Research and Discovery Plan Deliverable Submitted by Designer.

October 2026: Preliminary Design Deliverable Submitted.

November 2026: Staff and Stakeholder review of Design, Designer completes additions or changes if required.

Requirements

The qualified exhibit designer will:

1. Demonstrate the ability to complete a project of this size and scope by submitting 2-3 examples with reference contact information.
2. Have familiarity with design for installation in historic buildings.

Proposal Submissions

Please provide proposal materials including 2-3 examples and references to Director of Gibbs Farm, Sammy Nelson via email (sammy@rchs.com) by February 13, 2026. An email will be sent to confirm receipt. If you don't receive a response, please call the Gibbs Farm Office at 651-646-8629.



Farmhouse space with current
Farm Lab exhibit. View #1



Farmhouse space with current
Farm Lab exhibit. View #2



White Barn Space, view #1

Note: Farm animals will move
into new building in 2026.



White Barn Space, view #2

Note: Farm animals will move into new building in 2026.



White Barn Space, view #3

Note: Farm animals will move into new building in 2026.