

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Aquarium Maintenance Services

Howard County Library System

East Columbia Branch

Due Date: October 30th, 2026 (Close of Business)

Issued By:

Howard County Library System, Administrative Branch
9411 Frederick Rd, Ellicott City, MD 21042

INTRODUCTION: Howard County Library System (HCLS) is seeking proposals from qualified aquarium service providers to provide ongoing care and maintenance of the existing aquarium at the East Columbia Branch. HCLS is seeking reliable, cost-effective service that maintains a healthy, attractive, and engaging aquarium for library customers, particularly children and families. HCLS is not seeking a major aquarium replacement or extensive system redesign at this time; however, vendors may identify practical recommendations or modest enhancements that could improve reliability, appearance, animal health, or customer engagement. This RFP establishes the minimum requirements a bidder must address to be eligible for consideration.

The selection of the successful Contractor will be based on HCLS' evaluation of each Bidder's ability to provide dependable, quality service in a cost-effective manner.

The following criteria will be evaluated and should be addressed in the proposal:

1. Company and aquarium services provided; years in business
2. Cost proposal for routine maintenance, livestock, supplies, and optional services
3. Proposed service schedule, frequency, and response time
4. References / client list for comparable aquarium accounts

HCLS is not obligated to accept the lowest bid and reserves the right to reject all bids or amend the project's scope. All Bidders must be duly licensed or otherwise able to perform work in accordance with applicable requirements.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS: Responses to this RFP are due by close of business on October 30, 2026. Late submittals will be rejected. Proposals should be submitted to the manager of the RFP process:

Howard County Library System, 9411 Frederick Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042
rfp@hclibrary.org

Copies of the proposal **must be emailed** to the above email address. Questions regarding this RFP should also be addressed to the email above. Contractors may not contact other HCLS executives, managers, or employees regarding this RFP without written permission of the manager of the RFP process.

SELECTION: Vendors will be evaluated based on relevant experience, proposed service approach, reliability/response time, references, ability to support the existing aquarium, and overall cost/value. HCLS may also consider practical ideas that improve the aquarium experience without requiring a major system upgrade.

SCOPE OF SERVICES: The contractor shall provide ongoing aquarium care and maintenance services for the existing aquarium at the HCLS East Columbia Branch, including:

- Routine scheduled aquarium cleaning and maintenance, including glass, accessible surfaces, filtration components, and other equipment as appropriate.
- Routine water testing, water changes, and treatment necessary to maintain appropriate water quality and a healthy aquarium environment.
- Monitoring the health and condition of fish/livestock and providing appropriate replacement or restocking as needed and in accordance with the approved service plan.

- Inspection of pumps, filters, lighting, heaters, and other existing aquarium equipment during routine service, with prompt notification to HCLS of repair or replacement needs.
- Providing food, routine consumable supplies, and other materials required for normal aquarium care as identified in the proposal.
- Leaving the aquarium and surrounding service area clean and orderly after each visit.
- Quarterly Aquarium Condition Report submitted to the Solutions Manager, including water quality/pH levels, livestock status, and a summary of filtration system performance.

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS: Bidder is to format their response to include:

1. Brief description of company, aquarium services, service area, and years in business
2. Cost proposal showing routine service costs, livestock/restocking, supplies/consumables, emergency/additional service rates, and optional recommendations
3. Proposed maintenance frequency, typical service duration, and response time for urgent aquarium/equipment concerns
4. Two to three references or a client list for comparable aquarium maintenance accounts, preferably public-facing facilities.

EXISTING AQUARIUM / SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

HCLS intends to maintain and care for the existing East Columbia Branch aquarium rather than undertake a major replacement or redesign. Vendors should base their proposal on continued operation of the current aquarium and may separately identify reasonable recommendations or optional enhancements. HCLS is particularly interested in dependable routine maintenance, healthy and appropriate livestock, a clean and attractive presentation, and an aquarium that remains engaging for children and families.

CURRENT SYSTEM INFORMATION

Location: HCLS East Columbia Branch,
6600 Cradlerock Way,
Columbia, MD 21045

Aquarium type/size: Existing freshwater aquarium; vendors should confirm approximate capacity and existing system configuration during the site visit.

Existing equipment: Existing filtration, lighting, pumps, and related equipment to be reviewed during site visit

Current livestock: Approximately 25–35 goldfish and minnows

Current service frequency: Currently serviced monthly or biweekly depending on maintenance and livestock needs



Existing Aquarium – HCLS East Columbia Branch

HCLS anticipates continued use of the existing aquarium and associated equipment where serviceable. Vendors should use the site visit to evaluate the existing system and identify any equipment concerns or recommended maintenance needs as part of their proposal.

SITE VISIT: Vendors interested in arranging a site visit should contact John Drayton at john.drayton@hclibrary.org or 410-313-7794. Questions regarding the RFP, proposal requirements, or procurement process should be directed to the RFP Manager identified in the Submission of Proposals section.

SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

- Maintain the aquarium in a clean, healthy, and presentable condition appropriate for a public library environment.
- Communicate significant livestock health, compatibility, equipment, or water-quality concerns to the designated HCLS contact.
- Coordinate service visits in a manner that minimizes disruption to library operations and customers.
- Obtain HCLS approval before completing equipment replacement, livestock changes, or work outside the approved scope.

OPTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS / ENHANCEMENTS

HCLS welcomes reasonable recommendations that could improve the existing aquarium's reliability, appearance, ease of maintenance, animal health, or customer engagement. Any optional recommendation should be priced separately from the base maintenance proposal.

HCLS is not currently seeking a major aquarium replacement, extensive redesign, or museum-scale installation. Vendors should clearly distinguish between services necessary to maintain the existing aquarium and optional enhancements.

VENDOR PROPOSAL INFORMATION

- Proposed routine maintenance schedule and frequency.
- Description of work included during a standard service visit.
- Annual or monthly cost for routine service.
- Explanation of how livestock, food, consumables, and routine replacement items are priced.
- Rates for emergency, unscheduled, or repair-related service outside the normal maintenance schedule.
- Typical response time when HCLS reports an aquarium or equipment problem.
- Any recommended modest enhancements to the existing aquarium, with separate pricing.
- Identification of work, equipment, repairs, or replacement items excluded from the base proposal.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- HCLS expects the selected contractor to coordinate service visits in a manner that minimizes disruption to library operations and customers.
- Any significant equipment replacement, livestock change, or work outside the approved scope must be discussed with and authorized by HCLS before proceeding.
- The anticipated initial service term is up to two (2) years, with the option for HCLS to renew the agreement up to 2 additional one-year increments.
- The selected vendor will be required to provide a current Certificate of Insurance (COI) upon notification of award.